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THE REPRISAL FOLLY

A NEW menace threatens England—the menace of sentimental hysteria. When London or Coventry or Portsmouth is heavily and indiscriminately bombed, there are always people who, in natural but ignorant anger, demand that British bombers should at once inflict similar injuries on the inhabitants of Berlin or Munich or Rome. This cry is taken up by the less scrupulous kind of journalist and the less responsible type of politician. It is not the view held by statesmen, nor by experts, by the Staff or by most of the men who are asked to do the bombing. The R.A.F. would agree that bombing civilians could not end the war anyway.

Look at the matter dispassionately. We cannot afford to be sentimental, and this demand to kill the maximum number of German civilians as a reprisal is nothing but sentimentalism. The facts speak for themselves. We have a far smaller bombing force than the Germans, and as our aerodromes are three times as far from German towns as the Germans are from London or Sheffield or Bristol, our Air Force would need to be much larger than the German to be able to carry out a reprisal policy effectively. Secondly, this idea that the German morale would suddenly crack if Berlin suffered as London has suffered is just so much nonsense. If the civilian populations of German towns are less brave than the inhabitants of British towns—which may or may not be the case—it would make not the slightest difference to the war. They have to "take it," even if it is true that they show less dignity and fortitude in the process. Thirdly, British bombing of Germany has so far followed a very carefully considered and intelligent plan. We have concentrated, very efficiently, on bombing military objectives in Germany. Instead of wasting planes and bombs and pilots, as the Germans did last autumn, on a futile effort to bomb civilians into submission (and thereby strengthening their will to resist), British bombers have deliberately destroyed as many factories and harbours and railway communications and power-stations as they could. If they had not followed that policy the German submarine bases would have been left undisturbed; the barges gathered at French and Dutch ports for the invasion of England last summer and autumn would have remained unsunk and Hitler's invasion plans would now be far advanced instead of being, as we believe, completely disarranged, and Hitler would view the outcome of the war with an assurance that we are sure he can no longer feel. Every time British bombers miss the oil stores, the power plants, the docks and bridges and factories they are intended to hit, the German High Command rejoices, just as our defence organisers sigh with relief when German bombs destroy houses and are diverted from vital and often irreplaceable military objectives. There is no reason why, when fighting the Nazis, we should imitate either their psychological or military errors.

So far the British Government has courageously refused to give in to this stupid clamour. As we grow towards parity in the air with Germany—we are very far from equality now—every intelligent person should think coolly and carefully about the best way of ending this threat to the best interests of civilisation. As we grow in strength so it is essential that we should make clearer for what we are fighting. Our survival should promise the world freedom from slavery and a care for values that matter; we should be in a position, as the months go on and we remain unconquered, to give every human being on the Continent who has not become a victim of Nazi propaganda an assurance that we are sanely anxious to end the madness of competitive destruction. Such a programme needs intelligence. We believe that Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt are capable of a leadership and a policy that may yet save society. They know, as members of the General Staff know, that bombing cannot in itself end any war and that if we are to save civilisation from destruction and ourselves into the bargain we must use our strength with intelligence and discrimination. As it becomes clear, even to the victims of Dr. Goebbels' propaganda, that a German victory over Britain and America is unattainable, new chances of undermining the position of the Nazis and finding friends in Germany and in every oppressed country on the Continent will arise—and in that lies our hope. Every reprisal raid that diverts our bombers from the destruction of military objectives strengthens the terrible forces of hysteria released by war, and prolongs the war.

Spain Next ?

It is known that pressure is being used with all the resources of the Nazi machine to bring General Franco into the war at Gibraltar. It will succeed as soon as Hitler is determined to get his way without further delay. We do not doubt that Franco is reluctant to yield before the Germans have palpably won the war, for Spain is war-weary and hungry. Hitler, moreover, unwilling to lose the co-operation of Vichy, will not give Franco the *Lebensraum* he covets, French Morocco. But Franco could not resist a German invasion, and, if he were too stubborn, the Fascists of the Phalanx would, under Nazi direction, put his brother-in-law Señor Suñer in his place. For these reasons we doubt whether anything has been gained by Sir Samuel Hoare's efforts to buy him with cargoes of wheat and a loan of £2,000,000. His newspapers and wireless suppressed all mention of the wheat so completely that British propaganda was obliged to insert as a press advertisement a page stating the facts. For reasons of humanity we should wish to support the sending of wheat to this starving and typhus-ridden land. But we should wish to know rather more about its distribution. How much of it goes to the hungry republican prisoners, a million all told, in Franco's gaols and camps ? We gather from the Seville radio that workers can qualify for extra rations of bread only when they show a ticket certifying that they have attended Mass. It is better news that Gibraltar is being fortified with something harder than bread.

Food Once More

Parliamentary debates on economic questions seems to be sinking to a new low level—incredible as this seems. Lord Woolton, whose *obiter dicta* have for some time provided the funniest contributions to "This England," has once more excelled in the House of Lords. His Lordship "will only ration goods of which he can ensure a fair distribution." He still does not seem to have heard of the group or point rationing system. Lord Addison thought that we ought to regulate prices and not ration. But how if you do not ration can you regulate prices ? Subsidies ? They will merely ensure that first come first served : the best customer will get the best and most, with those who have leisure to go scrounging about getting in second. The fatuous request to adults to "leave" oranges to children is a further proof of the lack of imagination and intelligence hampering this vital sector of our war effort. The school milk scheme offered an admirable mechanism through which Lord Woolton could have distributed oranges where they are most needed, reserving some for hospitals and perhaps for tired Civil Defence workers. Not a bit. We appeal, we warn, we implore. And the food distribution (fish is only one example) deteriorates steadily.

Drifting in India

Mr. Amery's statement on India offered no fresh hope of any escape from a deadlock that exposes to ridicule all our idealistic professions in this war. It is easy to criticise the Indian parties, but the fact remains that the world holds us responsible for the government of this land in which seven provinces out of eleven are ruled by our unchecked autocracy, while more than five thousand political prisoners, including a score of ex-Ministers, lie in our prisons. The assumption governing Mr. Amery's speech was that our previous offers to India, which the Muslim League rejected as flatly as Congress, are above criticism and cannot be improved. But they were open to an objection which destroyed all their seeming generosity. We would grant Dominion Status, at some undated moment after the war, provided that Indians had reached substantial agreement over their future Constitution. But the customary way of reaching agreement by discussion and negotiation, subject to a final majority vote, was ruled out. It was made clear that any of several recognised minorities and interests, notably the Muslim League and the Princes, could, by refusing its assent, veto any advance. This offer was made with the knowledge that the Muslim League is firmly resolved to take this line, since it demands the creation of a separate sovereign Muslim State or States. The Princes, bent on preserving their autocratic rule, are equally determined to veto any constitution which Indian democrats could accept. Our offer, in short, was so framed that it never could be realised. Meanwhile, after placing the more reactionary minorities and interests in an impregnable position, we govern autocratically, with no possible solution in sight. Mr. Amery turned down the suggestions of the Liberal Moderates, for the sound reason that they could not form a strong administration if the League and Congress held aloof. He deprecated "drifting," but that is precisely what he is doing. The repeated suggestion that he should go out to India is a good one, but it would be useless for him to go unless he took with him a better offer. Our own belief is that the American offer of independence to the Philippinos after a fixed number of years, subject to a military alliance, is a model worthy of study.

After the Recess (*from a Parliamentary Correspondent*)

Members returned to their parliamentary duties after the Easter Recess in serious mood. Like everyone else in the country, they are deeply and rightly perturbed at the course of events in the Near East and in the Mediterranean area generally. Many of those who have been visiting their constituencies or speaking in various parts of the country came back disturbed by certain trends of public opinion. The public are worried about the turn that events have taken in the Near East. That is only to be expected and is not unhealthy when the war in which we are engaged involves every man, woman and child in the country. What is unhealthy is the growing distrust of the B.B.C. news bulletins and of the official communiqués as a source of reliable news. The people of this country have a realistic sense of the relative importance of events, and they listen to the news with cynical amusement when a lengthy description is given of the exploits of a single fighter plane while unpleasant events in Greece are dismissed in a few words. They are even more cynical when German gains are dismissed as being of no importance, because they remember the importance attached to the same territories when our forces captured them a few weeks earlier.

The public are also worried by what can best be termed the management of our war effort. They feel the Government is probably underestimating the qualities and strength of the main enemy. That again is not unhealthy. But what is unhealthy is the widely expressed feeling that the House of Commons is not performing its traditional duty of criticising defects in our organisation and generally keeping the Government up to scratch. They express surprise and relief when it is explained to them that many Members have performed these traditional functions effectively. The cause of the trouble here is easily diagnosed. Neither the press nor the B.B.C. give a balanced report of Parliamentary Debates. In a debate in which every speaker except the Government spokesman has adversely criticised the Government, both the press and the B.B.C. feel compelled to give a full report of the Minister's statement with the result that the views expressed by critics are crowded out of the picture. In a time like this nothing could be more dangerous than for the public to feel that their opinions cannot be conveyed to the Government. This may irretrievably undermine parliamentary institutions in this country, when in fact, as study of Hansard will show, the House of Commons has been functioning very effectively since the early winter.

This brings us back once more to the need for a recognisable Opposition. Had the critics been banded into an Opposition, not designed to hamper the Government and bring it down but rather to stimulate it and enforce improvement in our war effort by continuous pressure, then the B.B.C. and the press would of necessity have reported Opposition as well as Government views.

Never was the need for such an Opposition more forcibly illustrated than to-day, when the Prime Minister, against the obvious desire of the House, refused the request for a debate on the conduct of the war. The Prime Minister made a statement explaining why he could not make a statement, in which, on the lines of the B.B.C., he included an account of the bombardment of Tripoli for forty-two minutes and the destruction of four troop-carrying planes. In emphasising the absolute necessity for a debate as soon as possible, Hore-Belisha neatly exposed the relative triviality of these actions by asking whether it were true that the Germans had occupied the island of Samothrace. Hore-Belisha then asked whether Eden could make a statement on his visit to the Near East. Members were puzzled by the refusal of the Prime Minister to allow a statement by the Foreign Secretary "because materials were not available for the necessary presentation of the Government's case to the House." After all, Eden has been back a fortnight. When Shinwell said statement and debate were necessary because the public were very weary about the situation, the Prime Minister apparently mistook their stability and phlegm under bombing for lack of concern about the management of the war.

The general feeling of the House at the end of the passage of arms between the Prime Minister and those who pressed him was that Eden should make a statement now and that there should be a debate next week. Because the critics were not welded into an Opposition the Prime Minister rode off with the situation ; but, I venture to predict, he has done so only for the moment. This delay could not happen if a recognised Opposition were in existence which formed the "usual channel" through which business is arranged.

THE FIGHT FOR SUEZ

THERE is no need to say in many words what all the news proclaims: that we are deep already in a crisis graver than anything we have experienced since last June. So much we all perceive, and most of us guess that the dangers which encircle us may be multiplied in the months to come. This nation, which kept a stout heart through the shattering experiences of last summer, will neither fail in courage nor will it cease to hope. Its chief danger is, indeed, its gallant facility in the exercise of hope. If it hopes too lightly, it will fail to take betimes the measures, economic as well as military, for which its situation calls. The siege of this island, which faces an isolation completer than it has yet known, calls for an economic organisation tighter than anything we have yet contemplated. A beleaguered garrison distributes its dwindling stores with an equal hand and it tolerates no waste of effort or of income on the production or consumption of luxuries. If it concedes any privileges at all, it reserves them for its fighting men, its workers engaged in the harder kinds of manual toil and the children who incarnate its will to survive. As yet we have only played at realising these social principles of a siege economy.

The immense landscape that we have to survey is not easy to grasp in a bird's-eye view. If one of the spirits whom Hardy summoned to his aid in *The Dynasts* could describe it, he would have to range round the globe from Greenland to Singapore, while the Chorus of Pities sang its commentary on the wrecks, the famine and the slaughter. Like specks of floating dust on many oceans our labouring ships would catch his eye, until here and there they vanished, as bomb or torpedo struck their hulls. He would predict what we cannot trace, the swing of American opinion to and fro, which will one day determine whether the warships it controls shall guard the lanes of the Atlantic. He would know, what we cannot foresee, whether our men and the gallant Australians can be extricated from Greece. He could read the mind of the hesitating Turks and tell us whether they will or can defend the thin thread of water that severs Europe from Asia. He would see as one vast movement, which many conflicting wills must time, the effort of the Germans to close the Mediterranean at both its gates; for he would know whether a march through Spain upon Gibraltar will soon respond to the rush of Hitler's tanks through Libya towards Suez. He would describe for us the tension in Ethiopia, while the hunted and starving remnants of the Duke of Aosta's armies attempt, by postponing their inevitable surrender, to delay the embarkation of some at least of our forces for the defence of Egypt. He would trace the threads of the complicated conspiracy that runs through the outposts of what was once the French Empire from Casablanca and Bizerta to Beyrout and Damascus and over the desert to Bagdad. In a glimpse at the Kremlin he would show us its master compelled to grant the Japanese a free hand in the South, because he trembled at the suggestion of a German attack upon his provinces in the West. From Tokio, for an instant he would lift the veil and we should listen to a hurried dialogue between Prince Konoye and Mr. Matsuoka, trying to guess whether a disaster to the British forces in the Mediterranean will make it safe for Japan to expand her empire among the islands of the Pacific. Such shadows we can conjure up, but we can summon other visions to banish them. We can imagine a stone-walling defence of Gibraltar: we can people Egypt with the veterans of Eritrea: we can conceive a triumphant end for this complicated drama of the Mediterranean.

While this vaster struggle sways uncertainly before the imagination, some parts of the landscape are better lit than others. We know that the bold conspiracy which placed a tool of the Axis by a military *coup d'état* in control of Irak and its oil-wells has been foiled by the prompt despatch, within the terms of our Treaty rights, of Indian troops. We know that the first alarming rush of those two or three mechanised German divisions through Libya has been halted for the present near the Egyptian frontier. Our garrison left behind in Tobruk to embarrass its interminable communications has so far held its dangerous post and inflicted heavy losses on the enemy. We can divine that part of the army of East Africa is massing at Mersah Matruh for the defence of Alexandria, and that part at least of its air force has flown to ward off the new threat to the Suez Canal. The danger to the Canal comes chiefly from the German dive-bombers based on the airfields of Cyrenaica. Our chances of holding Egypt would be brighter, if we could even now transfer to Africa a strong force of bombers from this island. That we could well afford to do, though for a time our attacks on objectives in Germany would cease.

About Greece we know very much less than we ought to know. While Dr. Goebbels had lied with more than his customary volubility, the military bulletins from our own side, composed presumably at Greek headquarters, have been meagre, belated and far from candid. As to the political happenings in Athens we can make only bewildered guesses. Did the second Prime Minister of Greece in this war die as naturally as he died suddenly? What became of that M. Koutzias, hailed by the German wireless as a friend whom Hitler lately received in audience; and was he really called to office, and if so, why? It was puzzling to find that yet another civilian premier, M. Tsouderos, had succeeded the soldier who held his post for a few hours. This obscure drama ended with the flight of King George to Crete. It is only too painfully clear in retrospect that our little force of Australian and British troops, could only have hoped to delay by a few days the rush of the German mechanised divisions on Athens. With another hundred fighter planes it might have held out longer. But after the encirclement of the Greek army in Epirus, all organised resistance was over. Our only hope now is that a stubborn rear-guard action may permit of the withdrawal of our troops by sea. The Greek nation survives in Crete under the guard of our Fleet. But its command of these seas is threatened by the German capture of Lemnos, the island that commands the Dardanelles. They must have reached it through the Bosphorus in Bulgarian transports, which means that the Turks have abandoned any intention of defending the Straits. We must prepare ourselves for the loss of these always doubtful allies. All that Mr. Eden tried to achieve has been swept away, and the road to Suez is open from the North, by air if not by land. The audacious scheme of a converging attack on the Canal is realising itself before our eyes. To meet it, unless we can spare a considerable aerial reinforcement, we must rely mainly on the Navy. It has dealt a heavy blow to the German base in Tripoli, but while it did so the enemy has won other footholds.

It is natural that critics, who try to reason on realistic military lines, should regret the despatch of any British force, however small, to Greece, since this accounted, in their view, for the loss of Libya. Before the debate opens on these narrow lines we have another question to ask. The major enterprise that absorbed the greater part of our land and air forces after the first victories in Cyrenaica was not the sending of succour to the Greeks: it was the campaign in Eritrea, Italian Somaliland and Ethiopia. We can understand why it was timed for this moment: the campaigning season in East Africa is short and it is limited by the rains. But was it essential at this stage of the war to liquidate the Duce's Empire in this isolated region? Its defenders were too spiritless to do us any harm, and the longer we left them alone the weaker would they become through the wastage of their irreplaceable supplies. We might well have armed the patriots and postponed our own effort to a later phase of the war.

If an error was committed in our broader strategy, it was surely in allocating to this Abyssinian campaign forces which might well have been used to complete the conquest of Libya. The critics are, in retrospect, right when they regret our failure to finish that operation. The possession of Tripoli would have removed a danger to Egypt: it would also have assisted our naval and aerial control of the Sicilian channel, the weakest spot in our Mediterranean system. The three efforts—to hold Libya, to conquer Abyssinia and to help the Greeks—were certainly beyond our strength. Since we had to make a choice, the wiser decision would have been to postpone the Abyssinian enterprise, to finish the taking of Libya and to help the Greeks with greater forces than in fact we did spare for this purpose. On a long view we shall win this war only if we can make a great part of the population of Europe our allies, active or passive. That we shall accomplish only when we learn to think continually about them, to plan for them and with them, and to spend all our available resources that we may win them. Had we postponed our Abyssinian venture, we might have won the Serbs early enough to organise their resistance: we might have improved immeasurably the prospects of the Greeks: we might even have stimulated the Turks into activity. Our mistake in this war has been to spend too much in appeasing our foes, notably in Spain, and too little in aiding our friends.

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A LONDON DIARY

ONE'S friends in the armed forces almost all remain conspicuously unworried by anything outside the orbits of their duties, and fall upon any available pleasure with proper gusto. But civilians cannot, even if they would, escape anxiety, and in consequence are apt, especially if they are sensitive, to find their guilt-feelings excited by any form of enjoyment. I believe this to be natural—and wrong. War does not invalidate the theory that good consists in the increase of the sum of pleasure—a theory discoverable behind the ethics of theologians as well as of utilitarian philosophers. And a daily ration of such pleasure as does not interfere with efficiency positively helps efficiency, as well as being intrinsically good. A number of pleasures have, all too evidently, become unattainable. Travel, looking at pictures, music except upon the gramophone, have disappeared from most of us. For my part I feel that looking forward is a pleasure that, like war-aims, it is wiser not to make definite. Remembering is an important pleasure and when I think of happy weeks in Languedoc, Venice, or the East, I certainly do not experience "sorrow's crown of sorrows," indeed I am thankful for my luck in having travelled so much and deplore the opportunities that through unwise prudence I missed; but I cannot pretend that the pleasures of memory are unalloyed with sadness. There remains reading, and here I find the satisfaction undiminished: there remains the beauty of nature, and I have never responded more keenly to the first daffodils and blackthorn: above all, there remains affection, and though we all have been separated by the war from some of those for whom we care most, I fancy that one meets one's friends with a deeper or at least more conscious delight than ever before. There is now incomparably less cant than there was in 1914 and 1915 about the ennobling effects of war. No Gosse, so far as I know, has from a secure library welcomed it as an antiseptic: there is no longer any security for libraries or even for librarians; and the destruction of enjoyment shows in its true colours, no less malign and idiotic than cholera or cancer. But there is a cant of downfall as well as of uplift. I am not advocating the spirit of "Let us crown ourselves with roses for to-morrow we die," which seems to me vulgar as well as enervating. I am thumping the pulpit-cushion, and shouting; "Refresh yourself with reading, embolden yourself with the contemplation of nature, fire yourself with the geniality of friendship and Love!" Then, throwing off my surplice, I would add: "Get what kick you can from the sensuous pleasures, the scent of hyacinths, the prettiness of a girl in a new hat, the flavour of a new-laid egg. It is stupid to let unavailing worry about the future dull the enjoyment that the present still can offer."

* * *

I have been putting into practice the above precepts. Indeed the homily is probably prompted by a wish to justify to myself the enormous pleasure that I drew last week, despite the news, from four days holiday in Wales. (Inevitably I felt an obscure, irrational guilt as well as relief at having missed the great raids on London.) I went in a motor with a friend—he was, I hasten to add, on business of national importance!—to the Glamorgan and Pembrokeshire coasts. The wild beauties of the Gower Peninsula, the windswept, treeless remoteness of Hook Point and St. David's Head, the sea breaking into the coves, the screams of gulls, which to human ears seem so expressive of an alarm that has no reason, the pink cottages with slate roofs daubed to a cheesy or painterly white, the cathedral village of St. David's, and its noble Norman of lilac and amethyst stone, delicate and iridescent as a Claude Monet—all these were new to me and a cause of happiness. While my companion interviewed farmers, I waited in their tumbledown farmyards, reading Flaubert's *Education Sentimentale*. Thus among the merd of ducks and hens in this desolate landscape, a book brought before my eyes what the great Impressionists best loved to paint, the willows on the Seine, women with parasols leaning over balustrades, luncheons in landaus, with the sun shining through leaves upon fruit and wine. Wales itself gave me a delightful sense of being in what an old friend of mine calls "dear abroad," for the Welsh not only talk a strange tongue but receive one with a vivacious amiability that reminds me of the Italians. I found one uncommonly good inn near the bright-coloured village of St. Dogmall's on the estuary below Cardigan, and the stone-ground brown bread of Wales was as good as any I have eaten. Large areas of the coasts I was visiting have become the property of the National Trust, and I once again gave thanks for this invaluable body, which treats the property it holds for the public benefit so far more wisely than most corporations and councils. I hope that the Budget will persuade many more landowners to hand their mansions and estates into its keeping.

A little north of the road between Abergavenny and Monmouth, I came on a village with a castle and a charming church called Skenfrith. The castle belongs to the National Trust, but has been placed, regrettably in my opinion, under the guardianship of the Office of Works. For already the nefarious process of "restoration," beloved by that office, is ruining this ruin. Most of it might still inspire the painter, as it enchants the visitor, with shrubs and wild flowers springing from the crannied walls, but one section looks as if it had been built yesterday—and largely indeed it was. If this barbarism continues—and I dare say the Office of Works will not stop short of the untidy fruit-trees round the liquidating tower—the castle will be without interest except to a handful of antiquarians. Until recently, I was told, five men had been engaged on this unlucky task. There are still two. In this time of national whatnot, could not their muscles be used a little less unproductively? I do not suggest that nothing should be done to suspend the course of decay, but ought not only the most unobtrusive methods be used? If a tree has rooted itself in felicitous silhouette upon a wall, let it remain, even if in the future the ruin grows a trifle more ruinous. The pain caused to the antiquary is less than the pleasure given to the painter and to the rest of us.

* * *

I remember with happiness many ruins—Jumièges, Hurstmonceux before it was rebuilt, Tintern before the Office of Works got busy, Segesta, Epidaurus, Troy, Luxor, Persepolis and Baalbek rising above the orchards below the snow-sifted range of the Anti-Libanus. Such a taste for dilapidation is not, as is widely supposed, an eighteenth-century invention. I am not scholar enough to know how far the Chinese, the Greeks or the Romans enjoyed it. Isaiah and Omar Khayyam certainly made poetry from ruins, but it is in the Italian painters of the fifteenth century that, in my limited knowledge, time's ravages first excite aesthetic appreciation. In the Age of Sensibility, at the end of the eighteenth century, this taste not only inspired thousands of paintings and verses, but constructed at considerable expense a number of artificial ruins. To-day we are being treated to a surfeit of ruins in our great cities. Most of the churches that have suffered would, if they were left alone, come to look incomparably better in death than they ever did in life. Ivy, clematis and roses would mantle their unweathering bricks and mechanical mouldings, trees would shelter song birds where once there were slates and hideously stained glass, the encaustic tiles of the choir would be shrouded in wild flowers and waving grasses. (For worship new and more pleasing structures could be erected). I am not talking of the Wren churches, though some of these could advantageously enjoy such a destiny. "They should all be rebuilt," say some, "All demolished," say others, and a third party cries "All transferred to other places." I venture to suggest that each should be considered according to its architectural merits and the amount of damage done.

* * *

A pleasure to which one confesses with some hesitation is playing Bridge. Authors are well thought of for playing cricket or chess, but though I have many professional writers among my friends, I think I know only one who both writes well and plays bridge well—Mr. Somerset Maugham. While the opprobrium excited among most intellectuals by this game seems to be irrational, I think I understand it. Golf is a fascinating game, but I find the atmosphere of most golf clubs (except in Scotland) vexatious, owing to the noisier sort of stockbroker and the tweedier sort of stockbroker's wife. Bridge-players too often exude a similar aroma. I even think I have noticed that no exceptionally unworldly person is good at bridge, though I have known very worldly persons who played infernally ill. But this journal is known to have many readers who are not conspicuous for austerity; and for their benefit I will describe a form of three-handed contract that I have found great fun now that it has become often difficult to collect a four.

Deal the pack to three hands instead of four, so that each player receives 17 cards, the last card being left face upwards on the table. Each player discards four cards from his hand, one of which must be either an Ace or a King, unless he has no Ace or King in his hand. The twelve discarded cards are mixed face downwards on the table, and the auction then begins. The declarer receives as his dummy the one exposed card and the 12 concealed cards. Play and scoring as in ordinary contract with two exceptions: (*a*) 300 is scored at once for the first game won, 400 for the rubber-game if either of the opponents is also vulnerable, 600 if neither is vulnerable; (*b*) if one of the defenders has not included an Ace or King among his discards when his hand contains such a card, the declarer scores 1,200 points. If the declarer has made a similar omission, his two opponents score 200 points each. These penalties are annulled if they are claimed before the play of the hand has been completed. At the end of the rubber the player with the lowest score loses to his opponents, the respective differences between his total and each of theirs, while the player with the highest total wins the respective differences, e.g., if N scores 2,000, S. 1,500, and W. 300, W. loses to N. 1,700 and to S. 1,200, S. pays to N. 500.

Stakes should be lower than those in ordinary Contract, as the scores incline to be larger. The bidding, moreover, is much more of a gamble and less of a science. Not only is the distribution of eight cards in the dummy unknown, but bids may be made either to guide a prospective partner or to mislead a prospective opponent. The game, I think, not only is full of variety but affords useful practice in playing against eccentric distributions.

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The periodical that still bears the honourable title of *The Times Literary Supplement* is conducting what seems a methodical campaign against the highbrows, including two writers whose front page articles used to add deserved lustre to its own high reputation. In one recent number frontal attacks were made in reviews upon Kafka and Mr. T. S. Eliot, while a leading article took the occasion of Virginia Woolf's death—she, like Mr. Eliot, used to be one of the paper's most valuable contributors—to mingle faint praise of her writings with an insidious, carefully vague denigration of her opinions, tastes and friends. (It is fair to add that the same issue contained a generous and thoughtful appreciation of her work.) Lord David Cecil and Sir Hugh Walpole wrote effective letters of protest against some of the statements in these attacks upon Kafka and Mrs. Woolf. The critic must, of course, remain free to express his dislikes, and I confess that, while I can recognise Kafka's genius, I do not enjoy reading him. But the simultaneous appearance of these three surprising assaults seems to suggest a planned attempt to defer to the tastes of "the average man." It might be supposed that in this office we should welcome such a change of character in a weekly that once was to some extent a competitor. But, on the contrary, I am sure that the more there is of intelligent and informed criticism, the better it is for all of us. During the last war the *Times* suffered under Lord Northcliffe's proprietorship a degradation that was only temporary. One can hope that when this war is over *The Times Literary Supplement* will make a similar recovery.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of this column goes this week to T. F. Rose-Troup.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

In a day of not very cheerful reading the worst news I have seen is the statement in your issue of Thursday that the Prime Minister is to meet members of the Trades Unions Congress General Council to discuss with them the Trades Disputes Act of 1927.—Letter to *Daily Telegraph*.

It is a relief to read two sane comments, by F. Wentworth and Candidus, on this most Socialistic and crushing Budget, which is a barely disguised capital levy.

The Chancellor has set out to destroy his own class.

If, at 60, one has to ruin one's health and nerves working seven days a week till all hours for 4*s*. 10*d*. out of £1, surely it will be forced on us sooner or later that it is not worth while!—Letter in the *Daily Sketch*.

Man, 35, talented, versatile, wishes equip himself to help creatively in post-war reconstruction. Advice, suggestions, inspiration sought. Spec. int. in social and spiritual issues and creative living generally. Correspond. welcomed from any like minded.—Advt. in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

Rolls-Royce Wanted, suit tall, elderly lady.—Advt. in the *Times*.

TITLED OFFICERS

A list of 319 more appointments of officers in the Home Guard was issued yesterday. It includes peers, baronets, knights and brigadier-generals. There are only 19 plain "misters."—*Daily Telegraph*.

THE FOOD SITUATION

THE food position of Britain at the present time is roughly that of Germany in 1916. And we are facing a worsening of the shipping position. We would be fools if we did not recognise that the situation is pretty grim; that, in fact, the prospects, with Hitler in possession of the Channel Ports and straddling our sea-routes, and bombing our warehouses, is worse than anything we had to face in the last war. And hunger is not a thing you can dissipate with pep-talk. Nor is it a matter for improvisation, but for clear-sighted and long-sighted policy. At least we have this consolation that, even on the analogy of Germany's 1916 food resources, we still have two years before we reach the breaking point and we know why Germany's food front collapsed and we know, through the Science of Nutrition, how to get the utmost value out of the available foods. Nazi Germany, however, also knows. It is criminal folly to imagine that Germany will collapse through food blockade this time. The Nazi food economy has been devised, like the German military tactics, to turn to account lessons learned from mistakes last time. It switched its food economy in 1935. While the people were being inured to the monotony and stringency of wartime feeding even in peacetime, the agricultural policy was being adapted in such a way as to make Germany nearly self-supporting in the essentials. One of the contributory factors in the last war was the lack of fertilisers, especially nitrate. Now through the fixation of nitrogen so that it can be obtained from the boundless air by the process discovered by the German Jew Haber (driven into exile), there is abundance. Another factor was the insistence on maintaining beef cattle, although there was not sufficient supply of feeding stuffs. Thus the fat stock became extremely thin stock—just flesh and bone, skin and skeleton, without the desperately needed fat, and practically of no value as food. In preparation for this war, Germany went over to basic needs and saw to it that there would be no shortage of bread, milk and vegetables. Indeed it has been estimated that Germany can actually spare calories to the rest of Europe. Her weak point may be fats, because of the competing military needs, for explosives and for lubricants. The pillage from occupied countries is just "buckshee" as far as the dire essentials are concerned.

The other day I listened to one of our food experts enthusiastically propounding our new policy which was to be based, not on fat cattle, but upon milk cows, not upon subsidised wheat, but upon fresh vegetables and root crops. When his evangelic fervour had abated, I pointed out that I have heard Sir John Orr propounding such a policy, not as the desperate measures of a beleagured garrison, but as the expansive policy of sound peacetime nutrition. Why has there been resistance, not only in peace, but so far in war, to such a policy? The answer surely is that the National Farmers' Union has been dominated by the fat stock interests and the Ministry of Agriculture by the National Farmers' Union. Because, in this and in other things, the Ministry for Agriculture has proved itself so essentially a producers' Ministry and not a consumers' Ministry, the time has surely come when the Ministry of Agriculture should be merged as a department of the Ministry of Food, subsidiary to the main purpose of feeding the people. Even although Hudson has shown himself a Minister with character, the double harness will not work. You may recall how, in autumn of last year, the meat ration per head was raised to 2*s*. 2*d*.—ridicuously high in terms of war and the average expenditure on meat. This arose from the fact that the Ministry of Agriculture had fixed the price of meat too high, for the benefit of the producers, despite the warnings of the Ministry of Food. It could not work and it did not. The next scale of prices had to be lower. So the patriotic fat stock dealers rushed to the slaughter houses to dispose of cattle before the drop in price. There was not sufficient refrigerator space to level up the glut and the ration had to be increased to 2*s*. 2*d*. to take it off the market.

Now with the restrictions of shipping space and the curtailment of the imports of feeding stuffs, a virtue is being made of necessity. First priority is being given to dairy cattle. Then comes beef cattle. Then sheep. Then pigs. Then poultry. This takes into account the relative efficiency of the animals as food factories. To produce one pound of human food milk cows require five pounds of feeding stuffs, beef cattle require twenty pounds, pigs eight pounds and hens fifteen pounds. It takes two and a half times the weight of an egg in feeding stuffs to produce an egg. It will be seen that, in terms of feeding stuffs, beef cattle are still an exorbitant luxury. It could be argued quite fairly that it would be better to liquidate our beef cattle into milk and to import, in place of the feeding stuffs they would consume, boneless meat or canned meat. But there is a strong case for maintaining a proportion of our beef herds. There is a biological case for the order of priority. It takes you longer to breed cattle than to breed sheep, longer to breed sheep than to breed pigs, longer to breed pigs than to breed poultry. We can replace a hen quickly when we want to, and the sheep, after all, gives us not only mutton but wool. Bacon really is not highly necessary, nor a staple article of diet, as was evident when a third of the population did not even exercise its bacon ration. It is most important to concentrate on dairy produce, because it is an essential form of our protective diet. So, too, we must concentrate on vegetables, particularly on potatoes. There is not likely to be a repetition of last year's meat glut (although fat cattle are being killed off and the farmer will be tempted to wait until after the summer-grass feeding), because the slaughtering will be controlled. Prices are to be scaled to make them slaughter early rather than late. Needless to say, fat stock breeders are "kicking

like mad." Anyway, there will be more refrigerator accommodation this year, so the stocks can be held and released as needed.

It took the Ministry of Food a long time to realise that there was anything scientific about food, or that there was, in fact, a science of nutrition which might be rather important. Rationing, for instance, is dictated, not by nutritional standards, but by the bulk of supplies. It was almost by accident that Professor J. C. Drummond, the eminent bio-chemist and nutrition expert, was discovered tucked away in a ministerial backroom. He had been taken on as an expert on the gas-contamination of food—a military, rather than strictly nutritional assignment. The belated Government Scientific Advisory Committee on Food, under Sir William Bragg, and including Sir John Orr, whose prescience surely should have made him a key man from the start, is now functioning and seems to be getting its own way. Criticism of the Ministry has not been lacking. Its policy has been of a hand-to-mouth kind with Lord Woolton putting into our mouths anything with which he found his hands full. When carrots were plentiful, they were the Elixir of Life. When onions were scarce, well, what use were onions anyway? People get rather tired of sour grapes! Another difficulty has been that the Ministry has, not unnaturally, "thought Nationally." That is to say it estimates that there is ample oatmeal in hand to launch an "Eat More Oatmeal" campaign. But when housewives in, say, Nottingham, clamour for oatmeal as Lord Woolton suggests, the shopkeepers have no supplies. Why? Because the people in the locality have not hitherto eaten much oatmeal and the shopkeepers have not stocked it and are unable to lay hands on supplies at short notice. Would it not be wise for the Ministry, before launching some new idea to deal with the surplus, to see that dumps of the food are laid down in each district? Of course there would be trouble with the wholesale dealers.

The Ministry has done a great deal to curb the abuses of privileged eating in restaurants. It could still be argued that expensive restaurants, as distinct from workers' canteens and other communal feeding centres where essential workers get their rations supplemented, should be confined to unrationed goods, which are more expensive or which need more skilful preparation. There is also an argument, in districts where, for any reason, there is a temporary shortage of rationed goods, that Ministry of Food officials should have power to intervene and fix prices of unrationed goods and to "corner them," if necessary, for communal canteens. For instance, the Municipal Cafeteria at Coventry went without meat for a week and the manageress had to go into the open market and compete for high-priced turkeys, salmon, poultry, etc., to supply eightpenny portions. She had to risk a loss in order to maintain an essential service—communal feeding.

There has been a clamour for differential rationing, i.e., for making special allocations for certain types of workers or industries. There was the classic case of miners, who had to go without their "bait" because of the shortage of cheese. That has now been overcome by ensuring preferential supplies of cheese for mining and agricultural areas. Lord Woolton has now doubled the rations of prepared meats (breakfast sausage, etc.), which are extensively used by workers who take their midday meal with them in the form of sandwiches. The argument against extending differential rationing is that even the T.U.C. is not prepared to define a "heavy worker" for the purpose of getting additional calory value. It is fair to say that the Ministry of Food and the Inter-Departmental Committee, as well as the Cabinet Food Committee, have given a great deal of thought to the extension of rationing by devices like the "point system" as used in Germany and other methods. The "point system" is based on the allocation of so many points per head and if you squander them on caviare instead of on corned beef, it is just too bad for you!

One way of ensuring the economical distribution of food is through the extension of communal feeding and some of us would be happier if we saw the policy of establishing "British Restaurants" being prosecuted more vigorously. There was definitely a "piping down" on communal feeding, but I am assured that this was merely because of the need for making local authorities concentrate on emergency feeding, that is, provision for the homeless rather than the general public. Again, it has been complained that the local authorities have been given the impression that communal feeding is purely a wartime measure and must not be glorified into a social service, that it will end with the war. This impression given by the Ministry of Food may be politic in the case of reactionary Councils, who see communal feeding merely as a threat to private enterprise. But it is confusing the issue. Communal feeding, many of us believe, has come to stay. The excuse of the Ministry of Food would be that it is itself only a wartime expedient—an *ad hoc* Ministry. Here again we should insist that it has come to stay.

Even more disturbing are the signs of "food bootlegging." Just as when Prohibition came to America, the racketeers "cashed in," so with food regulation and rationing, unscrupulous speculators are trafficking in contraband food. There is evidence of a "black market" where food can be bought without restriction if the price is high enough. Much of the supply is probably stolen—a considerable proportion of the convoy intended to feed Sheffield after the blitz "went amissing" between the dock town and Sheffield. There are reports of sheep being slaughtered in the fields in the black-out—in fact, all the symptoms of a new form of crime. And there are certainly "food speakeasies"—premises unlicensed by the Ministry which are catering illicitly for the gluttons. There is cause for disquiet in the vegetable traffic. The Ministry of Food has just announced the setting up of a Vegetable Board which will buy up and entirely control the supplies of carrots and onions. It will fix the price for the producers. It will pay a fixed commission to the dealers and charge a reasonable price for the consumers. The State, as it were, has become a Limited Liability Company with, as its general manager in this case, one of the biggest vegetable wholesalers. It certainly can be appropriately extended to the Canning Industry. While there are about 250 small canners, there are only about five canning concerns that really matter. The need for proper canning of all surplus supplies in season and of meat and other necessities is obvious. It must be done at once.

We are facing difficult times, yet it is true to say that, with the proper food demonstrations, proper distribution and proper instruction of the public, we can really turn the situation to advantage. Sir John Orr's underfed half of the population can be properly fed. The overfed section of the peacetime community will be all the better for being curtailed. We started the war with a higher standard of nutrition, as a nation, than we have had since the Industrial Revolution, Perhaps that is why we have resisted so well the onslaughts of the blitz and the menace of disease.

We can hold the Food Front, but it needs wisdom, it needs foresight. it needs frankness.

RITCHIE CALDER

DISTRIBUTION OF SACRIFICE

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT]

A MAJOR war necessarily involves serious real losses on the community. Strictly personal losses, loss of life and limb, must be borne by the victims and little can be done to share the burden. If a hundred legs are lost by enemy action, it is not possible to distribute the loss so that the whole population loses a fraction of a millimetre off the length of their legs, or, better still, so that the loss should be borne only by those over 6 ft. 2 in. in height. If this could be done, we should all agree that the loss would not be very serious, either for the community as a whole or for any individuals in particular. Unfortunately, modern surgery has not yet reached these heights, and the loss of their legs must remain an almost intolerable burden to the hundred victims of enemy action.

Fortunately, the material or economic losses inflicted by the war are essentially fluid and impersonal. We are perfectly able, if we so choose, to distribute the burden as widely as we wish, and thus avoid any undue hardship falling on any individual or group. Next to the problems of maximum mobilisation of the war effort, the problem of distributing the economic losses due to the war is one of the major tasks of war economic policy.

From the point of view of the community as a whole, economic losses due to the war are of two main types: (1) physical loss of property due to enemy action such as bombing or sinking; and (2) the "loss" of current goods and services (including the service of maintaining capital goods), due to the diversion of resources to war production and to the armed forces.

We have unfortunately little control over the physical incidence and extent of the first type of loss; our efforts are directed solely to minimising it, especially in respect of property vital to the war machine. The extent and incidence of the second type of loss is largely in our own hands, and our efforts are directed towards making it, within certain limits, as large as possible. We want to spare the maximum amount of current goods and services for war production and actual fighting, so that normal consumption must be deliberately cut to a minimum.

If we still look at the problem from the point of view of the community as a whole, the task of distributing these losses remains fairly simple.

First, in regard to destruction of houses, furniture, factories, ships,

stocks, etc., by enemy activity. In the case of property essential to war production, this must be physically replaced, and as rapidly as possible. Armament factories, naval and merchant ships, essential stocks, etc., must be immediately restored so as to delay war production as little as possible. In the case of private houses and furniture, shops, etc., which are not of direct importance for war purposes, we cannot afford to waste resources on replacement at present; the community must redistribute available supplies so that everyone has the minimum essentials of life. According to Mr. Keynes, the destruction of houses by bombing has been less than the additions of a normal year of peacetime building activity. It should be no great hardship for the community to make do with the same housing accommodation that it enjoyed in 1938—especially since more than a million people are being housed at His Majesty's expense in barracks, army huts and billets which were largely not previously available for lodgers.

With regard to furniture, the State should take over all stocks of suitable furniture (beds, tables, chairs, cooking utensils), new and second-hand, and issue them only to those who have lost their furniture from enemy action, or who can prove real need. If these stocks become exhausted, more furniture could be requisitioned from persons or institutions still in possession of more than they need.

The second problem is that of distributing the supply of current goods and services which is to be allocated to civilian consumption. Since our object is to cut the total amount to a minimum, the most expedient, as well as the most equitable method of distribution is to give equal rations, or rations proportional to needs. This is already being done with a limited number of foodstuffs, but it could be extended —either by expenditure rationing or the point system—to the remaining foodstuffs and clothing, toilet articles and any other essential goods. It is not enough to fix rations; it is also essential that people shall have sufficient incomes to purchase the rations allowed to them, especially if these rations are based on a standard anywhere near the bare subsistence level.

So far we have looked at the problem of distributing losses from a purely physical point of view, that of a Central Planning Authority distributing the available supply of goods and of certain kinds of physical property among the civilian population.

From the point of view of the individual, war losses of the second type, and to some extent also of the first, manifest themselves as a fall in money incomes. This fall in money income is in no way related to the curtailment in consumption which must be borne by that particular individual. For instance, many people such as garage proprietors, actors, musicians, persons engaged in certain export or luxury industries, or in serving evacuation areas denuded of their normal markets, have found themselves suddenly deprived of their source of livelihood in consequence of the war. As a result, they tend to suffer an extremely severe cut in consumption, quite unrelated to the real loss involved to the community. The real loss to the community consists in less motoring, silk stockings, etc.—a loss which should be distributed as evenly as possible—or, in the case of entertainments, is necessarily concentrated on the main target areas where people have to spend their evenings in shelters. The fact that the people whose livelihoods have been lost may be unable to consume sufficient food or clothing, merely means that there will be more for the rest of the population; it is a sacrifice entirely irrelevant to the cause of their distress. Even though a general cut in consumption of food or clothing may be desirable, this is surely no way to achieve it. Moreover, it is not even certain whether a fall in money income will lead to such a cut. In the case of the very rich or the very poor, it may merely lead to a decrease in savings or an increase in indebtedness —to an increase or a decrease in their claims to future real income with no change in current consumption, or it may, of course, lead to their getting relief from public funds—for example, when they have been expelled from defence areas. Further, such a drastic shrinkage in income will have all sorts of other effects which contribute in no way to furthering the war effort. They may lead to default on insurance premiums or mortgage interest, or even to bankruptcy, with disastrous effects on morale and no release of real resources for war purposes.

It seems evident from the above that sudden and unexpected losses in money income due to the war should be avoided as far as possible. Before considering the real problem of distributing equitably the supply of consumable goods and services, the "false" problem of random financial embarrassment caused directly or indirectly by the war should be eliminated. This can be effected by liberal compensation payments. restoring—up to some prescribed limit—pre-loss money incomes. This will enable the victims of such losses to continue consumption on the scale allowed under whatever rationing is in force and to meet their obligations for rent, interest, insurance, children's education, etc.

Such a system is at present in force in a few purely haphazard cases. Thus, while the majority of those serving in the Forces have their pay reduced to 17*s.* 6*d.* a week, with allowances for dependents, there are some, especially Government and Local Government officials, whose incomes are maintained at their pre-war levels. Similarly, railway shareholders are also guaranteed a minimum dividend. This is a sound principle, but it should be applied as universally as possible, and not only in a few random cases determined by special political considerations.

It has been made clear above that the problem of distributing sacrifice in war is essentially covered (*a*) by widespread rationing, accompanied by family allowances to ensure that all can afford their rations of essentials, and (*b*) by restoration of losses of money income due to sudden and unforeseeable causes connected either with enemy activity or war mobilisation. What then is the role of taxation in this problem? Rationing, provided that it is applied over a wide enough field, is itself a sufficient safeguard against the much vaunted dangers of inflation, and at the same time secures an equitable distribution of available supplies. Have we any reason to view with alarm the ever-increasing size of the deficit, once we are assured that the size of the deficit is no longer to be regarded as a symptom of inflation? Is there any point in racking our brains for new and more fruitful forms of taxation, when we might take the easy way of relying on the good old floating debt or even on the more respectable sale of Savings Certificates which will be greatly promoted by an extension of rationing?

The answer to these questions is that the importance of taxation lies in the distribution not of present, but of future incomes. If we leave people their high, and in some cases swelling, incomes, and at the same time stringently curtail their expenditure, they will accumulate vast rentier interests which will entitle them to a greatly increased share in the national income after the war when the consumption controls are relaxed. We shall be forced to maintain unduly high post-war rates of taxation in order to reward these people for their enforced wartime "abstinence"; the higher their wartime incomes, the greater the "abstinence" and hence the greater the reward.

High and progressive taxation during the war has thus the important justification that it prevents an undue accumulation of the national debt and its concentration in the hands of those who already own a disproportionate share of the nation's property. There is even a good case, which has frequently been argued in these columns, for a capital levy during the war for the purpose of reducing the existing size of the national debt. Such a desirable measure should meet with a minimum of resistance during wartime when the multiplicity of controls allow to their owners the minimum of enjoyment from the ownership of either income or property.

THE WHEEL COMES FULL CIRCLE.—I.

IN a recent note Critic described the distress occasioned to the members of the Oxford Labour Club by the introduction of the words "love" and "truth" in an address by John Strachey. Hardened Marxists turned, it appears, an embarrassed pink beneath—if I may so mix my metaphors and my colours—the tan of their political red. I believe that the feelings experienced by the members of the Oxford Labour Club, if indeed, they *were* their feelings, are anachronistic and date from a fast vanishing past, that the wheel is coming full circle, and that Socialists of the future will draw some of their inspiration and derive some of their motive power from precisely those ethical concepts which the Socialists of the immediate past have so ostentatiously derided. Let me explain.

The Socialism in which many of us were brought up had an ethical basis. Capitalism was wasteful, but it was also wicked; it was wicked because it set man against man, dignified grab as initiative and greed as enterprise, assumed that the only incentive to effort was the desire to down a competitor, and prescribed as the sole end of value the acquisition of money and the power that money brings. This competing, acquiring, self-advancing, and other-besting creed had its own ethical dynamic. For it, possession was static, but acquisition was ecstatic. It was said of old time that you cannot serve both God and Mammon; "I know it is difficult," Samuel Butler had remarked, "but then anything really worth doing is." Butler's gibe admirably summarised the curious bargain which capitalism had struck with Christianity. With one's left hand one laid up treasure (on Sunday)

in heaven; with one's right one filled one's pocket (on weekdays) with treasure upon earth. Whether this compromise was Christian or not, it seemed to us young Socialists to be the antithesis of ethical. Capitalism transferred the law of the jungle to the market place: yet we believed ourselves to have outgrown the law of the jungle. Many of us had been reading a forgotten book, *The Science of Power*, by Benjamin Kidd, in which there was explained to us the biological utility of co-operation. The law of the jungle was struggle for survival and the selection of those who struggled most successfully. But one might struggle not as an individual but as a group. Now the law of the group was co-operation within the group, and the co-operative group had turned out to be biologically superior to the competitive individual. It was not the lonely, predatory hunters, the mammoth and the sabre-toothed tiger, but the meek, co-operating animals, the sheep and the cows, that had inherited the earth. Such was the gospel of Kidd.

But co-operation was not only biologically more efficient; it was ethically more desirable. What was the good of surviving, unless one survived for a purpose, and unless that purpose was good; good, that is to say, in a sense which had nothing whatever to do with survival? Unless the whole process of evolution and the emergence of man were meaningless, life must have some purpose other than its own survival, a purpose which one could only regard as the achievement of higher quality life. How is higher quality life to be assessed? By reference to the activities in which those who possess it engage and to the ends which they pursue. Some ends, then, must be of value in themselves. What are they? There is only the traditional answer, truth, goodness, beauty and love. The quest of truth for its own sake, the creation of things that are beautiful, the doing of things that are right, the loving of one's neighbour, these together with a certain level of physical and mental culture, an elevation of taste and a refinement of manners, constitute the elements of the good life. But to achieve them we must have leisure, education, and financial security, must, therefore, set up a society in which, through co-operation, leisured, educated, and financially secure citizens are set free for the pursuit of desirable ends. This, then, is the object of society, to enable men to transcend the brute struggle for existence in order that they may devote themselves to the living of the good life. But emancipation from the struggle for existence can only be achieved socially, as it was achieved biologically, by the substitution of co-operation for competition. As Mr. Clutton Brock put it in a Fabian tract, *The Philosophy of Socialism*, published at the beginning of the last war,

> the State exists not for its own power, which means the survival of its members or some of them, but so that its members may all be able to do those things which are worth doing. . . . Every State aims at a certain amount of co-operation and is kept in being only because men are able to forget themselves in co-operation. The question is, therefore, the ultimate political question, why shall they co-operate? . . .
>
> No Socialist can be logically and thoroughly a good Socialist unless he gives the right answer, which is that they shall co-operate so that they may, as far as possible, escape from the struggle of life to the doing of those things which are worth doing for their own sake.

Thus the ethical creed which underlay the Socialism in which my generation was brought up envisaged as a Socialist society an association of human beings formed for the purpose of giving all its members the opportunity of satisfying their desire for spiritual freedom and the good life.

Four affirmations were comprised in this creed. First, that unrestricted competition is not only biologically and economically disadvantageous, but ethically blameworthy; secondly, that certain ways of life are good in themselves, because certain things are valuable in themselves; thirdly, that the object of society is to enable all its members to pursue the things that are good in themselves; that this object, fourthly, it can only achieve, if it eschews the way of Capitalism, which is competition, and embraces the way of Socialism, which is co-operation. Socialism, then, as we understood it, entailed a certain conception of human nature and called upon its adherents to pursue a certain way of life. Men were to share with one another, to treat one another as equals, to respect one another as individuals and, so far as they could, to love their fellow men. Some of the older Socialists did actually try to live the Socialist life as they understood it, even under Capitalism.

There are two features of this doctrine which I should like to throw into relief. First, the inspiration of pre-Marxist Socialism was ethical; secondly, its emphasis was upon ends. If much of this seems naive to-day, it is pertinent to remember the optimistic atmosphere in which the pre-last-war generation grew up. Socialism had, we thought, been impossible in the past because economically mankind could not "run to it." The resources had simply not been available to give all men an adequate financial competence. As a consequence, no civilisation that had hitherto existed had embraced more than a tiny proportion of the citizens of the allegedly civilised community. But now, thanks to the progress of applied science, it would be possible so enormously to increase production as to bring the good life within the reach of all, provided that all were to own and to distribute equally for the common good the collective resources of the community.

For a variety of reasons into which I cannot here enter, the concepts of this Socialism were overlaid and its practice fell into desuetude, to be replaced by those of Marxism. In contradistinction to the old-fashioned Socialism, the inspiration of Marxism was economic and its emphasis was on means. By saying that its inspiration was economic, I mean that it treated ethical concepts not as fundamental, but as epiphenomenal, that is to say, as by-products of a particular stage of the economic and industrial development of the community. There were no ethical absolutes; there were only codes and creeds which (in the bourgeois) were relative to the existing state of society which they assisted to maintain, or (in the class-conscious workers) were relative to the forthcoming stage of society which they assisted to bring to birth. Ethics, then, were relative not absolute, subjective not objective. Now if love, truth, and justice are not objective ends, magnets to draw mankind, it is clear that they cannot be the ideals which draw mankind to change society. Hence the Marxist Socialist plotted and strove and fought and struggled not from love of truth, equality, or justice, but under the sign of economic fatality. Granted that his premises were correct, he had to act as he did; and he had so to act because the forces fermenting beneath the crust of society had thrown him up at the appropriate time to be the vehicle of the increasing pressure with which they were ultimately to break through the crust.

The significance of this emphasis on means rather than upon ends is most forcibly brought out in Arthur Koestler's book, *Darkness at Noon*. To one brought up in the older tradition this is indeed a terrifying book. Its theme is the conflict in Russia between two codes of ethics, the one that respects the individual, treats him as an end in himself and seeks, so far as may be, to love him—in fact the Christian code—and the one that treats him as an ant in the social termitary, a cog in the proletarian machine, as—it is the phrase of Koestler's new Communists—a million divided by a million, and the million citizens themselves as raw material for vivisection in the interests of the collective good. In the interests of that good, the liberal ethics of the nineteenth century, the ethics of fair play, must be replaced by the revolutionary ethics of the twentieth century. Those who have dedicated themselves to the Party must be equally deaf to the voice of love and to the call of pity; they must ignore justice and deny truth; at its behest they must rob, cheat, lie, betray, murder, and torture. What matters is not that one should be well-meaning, that one should be sincere, that one should be self-sacrificing, but that one should be objectively right. Now the path of objective rightness is laid down by the Party, and the Party is concerned not to impose virtue, but to exact obedience. Here is a quotation from the diary of an old Communist leader, waiting for his execution in prison:

> We differ from all the others in our logical consistency. We know that virtue does not matter to history, and that crimes remain unpunished; but that every error has its consequences and venges itself unto the seventh generation. . . . History has taught us that often lies serve her better than the truth, for man is sluggish and has to be led through the desert for forty years before each step in his development. And he has to be driven through the desert with threats and promises by imaginary terrors and imaginary consolations.

In so far as such a creed entails a faith, it is an axiomatic faith in the objective rightness of one's own, or rather of the Party's, reasoning. And objective rightness means what? Being a correct judge of the means that are necessary to maintain in the one country that has achieved it, and ultimately to spread to others that have not, the Socialist revolution.

Socialism, be it noted, is still the end, but the end is no longer discussed. In fact men have forgotten what it is like, so wrapped up have they become in the means that are necessary to its attainment. All they know is that they do not seek to attain it because it is good and right; indeed, they cannot, since these ethical conceptions have been dropped from the concept of the end and earmarked for the means, appropriated, that is to say, for the task of keeping the masses in step on their journey to the goal. "Good" in the new Communist creed means simply that which assists the Socialist revolution.

Socialism, then, has ceased to be a new way of life, ceased so completely that when talking to young Communists, it has often been difficult to avoid the impression, that what they object to is not the

goods of capitalism, but their distribution. The capitalist world, one has been tempted to think, would suit them very well, provided only that there were a different division of the spoils.

C. E. M. JOAD

BEGINNING WITH A MOORHEN

"You remember," said the farmer, after taking the first swallow of his bitter, "we were talking about morons." At least, that is what I thought he said. I realised that I had mistaken him, however, when he went on to say: "Well, I came on a nest this week, and I never saw a nest so high above the water." I said I supposed that, when a moorhen built its nest like that, it foretold a wet summer. "That's what people say," he answered; "last year the nests were ever so low." For some reason, the news did not depress me. There is a pleasure in listening to country prophecies that mitigates the gloomy content of the gloomiest of them. Then there is the fact that if one is only half-superstitious, one does not more than half-believe them. Many of them, too, fill the imagination with images—magpies, whitethorn, and so forth—and what could be more charming than a moorhen with its red yellow-tipped bill? (The bird books say that the name ought to be "mere-hen," but luckily the genius of language spurns correctness.) So pretty a bird is welcome to the mind even when it is a pessimist about the weather.

After all, pessimists associated with beauty have always been popular. It is the optimists who have a bad time of it with the fastidious. The common adjective for them is "smug." Browning, one of the least smug of human beings, almost lost his reputation through being partly an optimist. In the generation that followed his death, people turned from him for relief to the more attractive pessimism of A. E. Housman and Hardy. Housman, like the moorhen, was a pessimist who made the world somehow seem more beautiful. Forebodings were associated with cherry-blossom. Bad news became good news in such a setting.

Birds and flowers, whatever they predict, will probably always bring a mixture of happiness to the imagination. One curious fact about the human attitude to them is, however, that, whereas flowers have mostly been regarded as symbols of the transience of life, birds have again and again been celebrated as symbols of immortality or, at least, of deathlessness.

> Frail man, his days are like the grass;
> Like flower in field he grows.

Compare this with:

> Thou wast not born for death, immortal bird;

and

> Still are thy pleasant voices, thy nightingales, awake.

To the poet the nightingale that sings to-day is the same nightingale that sang in Eden, but the apple-blossom is the flower only of a season. It is hard to explain why birds should have come to be thought immortal in a sense in which even man is not. Possibly, the reason is that man is an animal that changes—changes his dwelling, his clothes and even his food from one generation to another—and that the bird builds the same nest to-day that it built in the first spring after it left the Ark. There are, no doubt, slight changes in the life of birds owing to varieties of climate. There are authorities who tell us even that in Shropshire chaffinches sing with the equivalent of a Shropshire accent. At the same time, the chaffinch of to-day looks exactly like the chaffinch that lived in our grandfathers' time. Can we say the same of human beings? Why, the human race changes in less than a century almost out of recognition. Crinolines give place in the course of time to trousers; and Dundreary whiskers to naked cheeks. As for the nests we build for ourselves, we attain none of the immediate perfection of bird architecture. On the contrary, we go on experimenting with every form of novelty, even casting away beauty when we have achieved it because we prefer ugliness itself to lack of change. "Anything for a change" has always been a popular motto with the human race. That is the explanation of Victorian architecture. The Victorians with their tumultuous growth of wealth had a greater opportunity than the men of any previous time for filling the world with beautiful houses; but, too fickle to care for tradition, they set up innumerable houses that had as little charm as a display of bad manners. Compare a wren's nest with a Victorian villa, and you will see why it is that so many human beings take pleasure in birds as, in a small way, symbols of perfection.

Not that any sane man would set birds above human beings. Sentimental dog-lovers may say: "The more I see of human beings, the more I like dogs"—one of the most foolish pieces of bitterness ever uttered. Even the most embittered ornithologist has never been heard to say: "The more I see of human beings, the more I like birds." Yet it must be admitted that there are occasions on which it gives us more pleasure to see a bird than to see a human being. The heart does not leap up at sight of a man coming along the road as it leaps up at sight of a willow-wren flitting from song to song among the branches of a sycamore. Any willow-wren will give us this pleasure. We are more particular about human beings: we may be glad to see Tom but not Dick, or Dick but not Harry.

Some people may argue that there is a fallacy in this comparison. They may point out that, though a man may enjoy looking at any willow-wren, this does not mean that he enjoys looking at every Tom, Dick and Harry in the nations of the birds. "How I hate the sparrows, the sparrows, the sparrows"! begins one of the poems of Dora Sigerson; and many people share her hatred. W. H. Davies, it is true, preferred the sparrows and the common birds to all the rarer species at whose pictures we gaze so longingly in the bird books. But the preference is unusual. Most of us would rather see a raven than a rook, a bustard than a starling. Hence it must be admitted that we do make distinctions in our likings for birds as in our likings for human beings. At the same time, there is no class of human beings that interests us in the same wholesale fashion as a class of birds—say, goldfinches. Of what class of human beings—even our fellow-countrymen or members of our party—could we honestly say: "I like one as well as the other and I don't care which of them I see, if only I can see one of them"? Yet we can say something more or less like that about the goldfinches. To us any goldfinch is as good as any other goldfinch.

Similarly, any cuckoo is as good as any other cuckoo, so that at this time of year countrymen ask each other not "Have you heard a cuckoo yet?" but "Have you heard the cuckoo?" Every cuckoo is *the* cuckoo. No one, on the other hand, would dream of asking: "Have you seen the Scotchman?" meaning "Have you seen any Scotchman," because we differentiate among Scotchmen as we do not differentiate among cuckoos.

The truth is, of course, that a Scotchman *qua* Scotchman does not give us the feeling once more that the world is a good place, and that a cuckoo *qua* cuckoo does. I defy any man possessing the powers of reason not to feel a kind of smile spreading through his being when he first hears those two notes from an invisible bird in April. An Air-Commodore speaking on the wireless recently suggested that an appropriate answer to the greeting, "Spring in the air" is "Spring in the air yourself." Well, one does not exactly spring in the air, unless one is a pedestrian with the eccentricities of Hazlitt, at the first call of the cuckoo, but perhaps one might be said with not too much exaggeration to make a metaphorical spring. We know that whatever else has happened, the good days have returned. Hope has been fulfilled; or it might convey more of the truth to say that faith has been justified. The light that can never be utterly quenched is again shining on the earth, and for at least five minutes—and five minutes are better than nothing—all's right with the world.

Poets have lamented the passing of spring—how voices fall silent and blossoms fade. But I wonder whether we should be happier if the cuckoo sang all the year round and the cherry-blossom lasted for ever. I doubt whether I should be an enthusiast for a cuckoo that sang from January to December. I have known people who found the song a little tiresome even by the first of June. There is no noise that the cuckoo makes that could not be adequately produced by machinery. Yet how little the songs of birds move us when we hear them from a gramophone or even the wireless. Those gramophone records are delightful in so far as they stir the memory, and they are extremely useful in familiarising us with the notes of the various birds. But no poet could write inspired verse to a bird that he knew only on the gramophone.

Even the nightingale has not a song that survives mechanical reproduction as a song by Mozart does. We must hear it in its natural setting in order to enjoy it as of a piece with the resurrection of the earth. The song of the nightingale gives even more pleasure to the imagination than to the ear. Those who judge it by the ear alone are often disappointed by it. But the idea of the nightingale, singing away the darkness through the nights of early summer, is delightful; and to hear the nightingale for the first time singing in April, even in the daytime, is to have a ridiculous feeling of happiness that only other people who listen for the nightingale understand. . . .

As for the swallows, I saw four of them skimming over a pond the other day. It was a pleasant sight, though the rain was falling, and for the moment I did not care whether the moorhen's prophecy was going to come true or not.

Y. Y.

SAVING THE SABBATH

(After the late Mr. Vachel Lindsay)

FAT white bucks in the Parliament hall,
Hot and perspiring, trembling with emotion,
Trembling with emotion,
Some began to shout and some began to bawl, *In a rising bass chant.*
For Old Man Morrison, he had got a notion
That theatres could open on the Sabbath Day,
For people who wanted to go and see a play,
When they ought to be at chapel, when they ought to be
at church,
Or teaching the children with the Bible and the birch;
And the back-bench Members fairly shook the room
With a boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom!

A Liberal Member rose to his feet *Slowly and solemnly.*
And swayed to the Sunday Observance beat,
Pounded on the Bible with his ju-ju sticks
And summoned up the spirit of lamented Jix;
"Art is degenerate!
Writers are degenerate! *With increasing tempo.*
London is degenerate!
Boom, boom, boom!
Artists and writers don't care a bean
For anything reasonable, Christian and clean,
Down with Literature! Down with Art!
Down with intelligence, cynical and smart!
Down with the playgrounds of the idle rich!
Down with the drama, and don't ask which—
Hark to the children, running in the street,
Nobody to scold them and nobody to beat,
Look at the statistics of juvenile crime
Through theatres on Sunday or any other time."

Then across the waters of the River Styx *In a ghostly whisper.*
They saw the spectre of Joynson Hicks,
His ghost rose up and he cried to the moon:
"Mumbo Jumbo will get you soon!
What did I tell you, all you sinners?
Stick to the chapel and your Sunday dinners!
You opened the cinemas and let in sin,
You gave up Genesis and took up gin, *Rising to a shriek of frenzy.*
Boom, close the theatres!
Boom, censor Literature!
Boom, kill the Bolsheviks!
And you will win!"

They listened to the ghost of Jix and then *Heavily and with pomposity.*
Into the lobbies went the Parliament men,
The Member for Nineveh walked into the whale,
The Member for Babylon treading on his tail,
The Philistine Members, speechless with horror,
The Honourable Members for Sodom and Gomorrah,
And Daniel went into the lobby—
Shadrak, Meshak and Abednego went into the lobby— *To the tune of "Ilkley Moor baht 'at," as far as possible.*
All the animals went two by two into the lobby—
And the Lord saved his Sabbath,
And the Lord saved his Sabbath,
Hallelujah! The Lord saved his Sabbath
By a majority of eight!

REGINALD REYNOLDS

THE HEALER

I MUST admit that I'd been cursing doctors, medical assistants, mind healers, sorcerers, and such like all my life.

But after a certain case I got to know of, I don't swear at them any more. I'm even prepared to take their side.

It was really quite a remarkable case.

The main point is that all the doctors refused to touch the case of that little girl. They just shrugged their shoulders, and spread their hands. The devil alone knows what's the matter with her, they said. Medical Science is quite at a loss how to deal with it.

And then, a common man, without even a secondary school education, and in his soul, perhaps, a son of a bitch and a rogue, steps in, takes a look at the girl with his pop eyes, turns over a thought or two in his head—and there you have a healthy creature instead of a hopeless invalid!

This is what happened.

The girl was quite young, about thirteen, or so. She had had a fright or something. It seems that other children frightened her. She went outside on her own private business, and the kids took it into their heads to play a trick on her. Threw a dead cat at her, or something, which gave her a fit. So that afterwards she could not speak, at least not in words. She'd mutter, or growl, but she'd never undertake to say the whole word. She wouldn't speak even when she had to ask for something to eat.

Her parents, as you might expect, were not the kind of people who move with the times, or take the lead in the advance guard of the revolution. They were poor people, small craftsmen, I think, who made boot laces and sold them in the streets. The little girl, too, was helping, turning a wheel of sorts, or what not. And now, of course, she couldn't go on turning, and completely lost her speech into the bargain.

The parents, naturally, began to cart her from one doctor to another, and in the end took her to see a special man. I can't say that he was a professor, or a Tibetan doctor of magic, or anything of that sort. He was merely a self-made healer.

So they brought the child to this specialist, and explained the matter to him.

The healer says:

"The case is clear. Your little girl lost the gift of speech through a violent fright. I have a notion that it might be a good thing if I frighten her back again, so to speak. Then, perhaps, the little vermin will start speaking again. The human organism deserves our greatest respect and admiration. Doctors, and professors of all kinds, find it hard to discover how things are and what facts happen in the human body. As for myself, I'm in complete agreement with them. It isn't easy to say, for instance, where the kidneys and where the liver is situated in the human interior. Some people have it in one place, others—in another. Some people complain of aches and pains in their bowels, others lose their gift of speech, although their tongues seem to wag all right. However it may be, we must find the cause and then knock it out with a cudgel. In this belief is all my strength and my science. I," says he, "discover the cause and root it out with my own hands."

The parents, of course, felt a bit uneasy, and asked him not to hit their little girl with a log.

"No, no, of course not," the healer says. "I certainly won't hit her with a log. I'll take a towel, say a bath towel, a large one. Then I'll make your little slut sit here, in a chair for two or three minutes. Then I'll run quietly out of that door there, and just give her one across the back with the towel. And then perhaps she'll come to her senses. Perhaps she'll take fright once again, and I have an idea that she might then start talking."

So he took a bath towel from a drawer, made the little girl sit down where he wanted her, and went out of the room.

A minute or two later he came back quietly, stole up to the child, and gave her a good one across the back.

She, of course, screamed at the top of her voice, and had a sort of fit on the spot.

And, would you believe it, she started to talk there and then.

She talked and talked at such a rate that you'd wish she'd stop. She clutched at her mother, and begged to be taken home at once. And her eyes had a look in them as if she were beside herself with fright, and even as if she were a bit out of her mind.

The parents ask:

"She won't go silly after this, will she, doctor?"

The healer says:

"That I can't tell you. My business was to restore the gift of speech to her. I've succeeded in this, as you can see yourselves. And I may add that your three rouble note doesn't interest me particularly. I'm more interested and amused to see the results."

The parents gave him a three rouble note and went away.

But the little girl, certainly, got back her speech. It's true, she's become a little queer about the head, perhaps a little defective in some respects. But she can talk all right.

MICHAEL ZOSHCHENKO

(Translated by Elisaveta Fen)

THE MOVIES

"So Ends Our Night," at the Gaumont.
"The Bank Detective," at the London Pavilion.
"The Ghost of St. Michael's," at the Regal.
"March of Time, No. 13."

So Ends Our Night, directed by John Cromwell, is a film of refugees before the war. This is the sort of theme that can be tackled by Hollywood on various levels. At the worst we might be given another adventure story of an American holidaying round Europe, with a background of persecution, and one frontier after another closing to everyone except him—the equivalent in tears to the farce of *Comrade X*. Probably that is the simplest way and the nearest to the heart of American audiences. Or Americanism, and its immunity from European suffering, could be suppressed, and the trek of refugees could be shown as objectively as the tragic march in *Grapes of Wrath*. This would be the ideal way, but at present it seems unattainable. There is a gap between reality and drama over which a director must compromise. *So Ends Our Night* belongs to the class of *The Mortal Storm*—American, but not too American; what it lacks in documentation it makes up in atmosphere. Thus one of the characters is a Jewess whose lover has turned against her and who wanders from Vienna to Prague, Zurich to Paris. If this were a small part, realism would win and the part would be played by a Jewess; but it happens to be the leading role, so it goes to that very un-Jewish actress, Margaret Sullavan. She is not exactly out of the picture, but rather at arm's length from reality. The same, perhaps, is true in a lesser degree of Fredric March as a political refugee on the run; but being a more accomplished actor than Miss Sullavan, he succeeds in being more convincing. But the success of *So Ends Our Night*—and I found it, despite crudities, a moving film—is due to the imagination that has created its background. Not only the tragic partings and brutal arrests, but the day-to-day routine, the shabby and sometimes comic shifts of refugee living, are vividly suggested. There are some admirable scenes, touched with caricature, in prison, in a hotel for refugees, in a back parlour where passports are sold, in a frontier customs house. The details here and the faces chosen are as striking as the best in gangster sets. This atmosphere, in a curiously uneven film, is sustained by photography that makes the most of uneasy eyes and dark perspectives. The most striking performance comes from a young actor, Glenn Ford, whom I have not seen before; he makes us believe in his fragmentary love idyll with Margaret Sullavan, and also, as she does not, in the anonymous, interrupted, semi-criminal existence to which the refugee without money is driven. At the beginning of the film he is a helpless boy with raw nerves and when it ends he has learnt toughness and grown up. Von Stroheim plays with unusual restraint a minor part as a Gestapo agent; and in general *So Ends Our Night* impresses its tragedy by understatement.

W. C. Fields is a comedian of almost Shakespearean mould. Bardolph and Pistol, even Falstaff, are the sort of company he seems to emerge from. He is loud-voiced, dauntless, self-sufficient—one of those human balloons no amount of puncturing can deflate. The indignities he suffers in *The Bank Detective*, from pots thrown at the head to a police chase in cars over a mountain pass, would rob any other man of his style, but on him they are like decorations pinned. In his last film he had to share the grand manner with Mae West; here he is alone. *The Bank Detective* contains more slap-stick than usual, and the incidents are drastic, even in a world fit for Marx Brothers to live in.

Will Hay and his Scholars transfer from music-hall to screen better than most English stage comics. Some of the scholars, I am sorry to see, have dropped out of *The Ghost of St. Michael's*. There is no longer an old, old man who once tapped engine wheels; gone, too, is strident youth with a mastery of slang. Gentility, in fact, has come to Narkover, and—evacuated now to a castle on the island of Skye—lobster and whisky suppers take the place of crime and poker in the dormitory. Will Hay, however, is as fraudulent and harried as ever, and he is helped on this occasion by Claude Hulbert, the perfect Wodehouse Reggie. Together, they sleep in haunted bedrooms, brave the rigors of the class-room, and hunt down the ubiquitous Fifth Column. There are some very funny moments, but on the whole—even by horse-laugh standards—*The Ghost of St. Michael's* is slightly below par.

The new March of Time is called *Americans All* and its theme is the immigrant population of America. The interest for English audiences lies almost as much in the propaganda drive revealed by films of this kind as in the subject-matter. We have seen lately in two full-length films—*The Ramparts We Watch* and Paramount's *The World in Flames*—the brilliant use to which newsreel material is being put in the effort to focus American opinion. *Americans All*, which emphasises the unity of America's millions, is less spectacular but none the less engrossing. Some surprising figures are revealed. Nearly forty million people have immigrated to America in the last hundred years. The number of German-Americans to-day is given as seven millions, and of these it is calculated that 200,000 are actively pro-Nazi. We are shown pictures of the local *Bund*, complete with uniforms, banners and community singing. The Americans are more capable than we of putting their problems on the screen. I should like to see a similar film, sponsored by the Ministry of Information, about the aliens, friendly and unfriendly, in England.

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, April 26th—
- London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Maurice Miles, Queen's Hall, 2.30.
- Joan Lawson: "Soviet Ballet," illustrated by dances, 9 Fitzroy Square, W.1., 2.30.
- Second International Youth Rally, 250 Camden Road, N.W.1., 2.30.

SUNDAY, April 27th—
- John Katz: "The Sin of the Intelligentsia," Conway Hall, 11.
- Krishna Menon: "India To-day." W.M.A., 9 Gt. Newport Street, W.C. 2, 6.
- K. B. Smellie: "Social Philosophy," 17 Manchester Street, 11.

MONDAY, April 28th—
- Fabian International Affairs Group Snack Lunch. Louis de Brouckère: "Belgium," 12 Gt. Newport Street, W.C.2., 1.

TUESDAY, April 29th—
- Eugenics Society Luncheon. George Benson, M.P. on "Penal Reform," Pinoli's Restaurant, 1. Tickets 3s. 6d.
- Richard Church: "Apollo and His Brother," Royal Institution, 5.15.
- Circle of International Art Bach Concert. Wigmore Hall, 6.30.

WEDNESDAY, April 30th—
- "Homage to Greece," in aid of Greek Red Cross; programme includes a ballet presented by Marie Rambert, Institut Français, 5.

THURSDAY, May 1st—
- First of five public lectures by C. E. M. Joad on "Some Problems of Ethical Philosophy," Birkbeck College, 1.15.
- F. J. Osborn: "Reconstruction in Town and Country," Morley College, 6.30.

FRIDAY, May 2nd—
- N. B. L. Pevsner: "English Cathedrals—the Late Middle Ages," Birkbeck College, 5.
- H. J. Liem: "The European and the Sino-Japanese War," Federal Union, 7.30. Tickets 1s. from Howard Fox, 37 Gower Street.

Correspondence

A LIVING THEATRE

SIR,—The article "A Living Theatre," appears in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION with particular aptness as an echo from "The Great War," for it was in *The Nation*, now incorporated, that in 1919/20, under the same title and in similar circumstances, appeared the articles and correspondence which heralded the founding of the "Everyman Theatre."

While paying respect to Mr. Gielgud's earnestness of purpose one may believe the birth of a living theatre to be so vital that some dangerous inconsistencies in his plea may be pointed to without detracting from support for that plea. One may also reasonably hope that the lessons to be learned from the experiences of the "Everyman" may not be lost because memories are short or withdrawal from an active part in the London theatre and an exaggerated distaste for personal publicity have allowed its achievement to be forgotten.

The establishment of a worthy theatre is an ideal that has been deeply held by many, from Charles Frohman and Granville Barker onwards. It is an aim so important that it transcends the individual—as Mr. Gielgud emphasises in his last paragraph. It is to be hoped that ideal will not again be lost between grandiose schemes for a National Monument that remains a hoarding and the over-modest scale of the Everyman Theatre. This time let there be a vigorous and concerted fight for its coming-of-age.

Mr. Gielgud sums the alternatives as:

(*a*) An excavated crater in Kensington;
(*b*) The "Old Vic" severely handicapped financially;

and adds—

(*c*) If any National Theatre scheme . . . is to receive the support of a really wide public . . . it must be absolutely first-class in its standard and equipment.

Is not this confusion of thought? The "Old Vic" has always been crippled because its endowment was too small. The crater in South Kensington exists because the National Theatre endowment was too large for anything but a State Museum in this unready country. Mr. Gielgud would tie a Theatre he desires to be living to a building that must be "absolutely first-class" in equipment and is therefore dependent on appeal to "a really wide public." None of these are solid foundations for a Living Theatre. Lilian Bayliss was right when she said of her "Old Vic"—"A National Theatre? . . . THIS is the National Theatre." It was indeed because it was a living theatre.

The one absolute essential of life for a worthy theatre is precisely freedom from dependence on the taste and therefore the financial support of "a really wide public." It must form and lead the taste of the public in integrity of purpose, whatever may be their reaction to any particular production. Only by pursuing consistently a policy over a long period can dependable support be gained and *held*.

As neither creative artist nor writer provocative of thought can function fully under unceasing threat of the debt collector, and especially of the rent collector, this entails adequate endowment of the work, but not necessarily provision of a millionaire's dream theatre. It is true that the artist cannot do good work with inadequate materials, but it does not by any means follow that "absolutely first-class" materials necessarily lead to first-class work. Given reasonably adequate materials it is the man who uses them that matters.

Mr. Gielgud omits any reference to Jacques Copeau and his Theatre du vieux Colombier in Paris, through whose off-shoot, the Compagnie de Quinze, his own productions were so markedly influenced. The "new life" of the French theatre commenced with Copeau and Antoine long before Baty and Dullin. Copeau had a small endowment from the Government, that was cut down in a French Educational economy. Copeau's theatre died.

There is, however, no useful comparison to be made now between the Continental theatre and the English. The Continent has a standard based on a century or more of substantial endowment by ruling princes, by States, or by municipalities. The English theatre has never had such endowment and could not have a similar tradition—much less a similar public to cater for. Its standard has been based on the personal taste of a long line of actor-managers of whom Mr. Gielgud is the latest. It is

much to his credit that having practised actor-management so successfully he now recognises that the future of a Living Theatre depends on a very different system. Mr. Gielgud wishes to break down the division between the commercial theatre and the "highbrow" (why drag in this discredited misnomer?); but I earnestly urge: Leave to the commercial theatre its department of entertainment and set out to provide, in a theatre of totally different aim, for that other public so inadequately catered for. Let there be no unholy alliances. The purpose of each is quite legitimately entirely different. For the commercial theatre it is making of profits, but for the living theatre it is to provide intimate contact with the exploring mind of man.

Mr. Gielgud's suggestion in his last paragraph for drawing together those of similar aim to work co-operatively holds much promise—but let me earnestly warn against any form of committee management of the actual work. That near-foundered the "Everyman" in its first year. It may be suspected of success in sending the National Theatre scheme to sleep. It is the essence of a progressive, experimenting theatre that its producers must work as free artists. Failing Mr. Gielgud's discovery of the right impresario, I suggest to him to form a *small* Governing Council (not more than five) of "Elder Statesmen" (but not elderly) to guide general policy (but *not* the active work), to give informed criticism with sympathetic understanding of difficulties; and, at least equally important, by their repute and influence to ensure favourable consideration by the financial "powers that be" (who are too frequently inclined to meet the eager enthusiasm of the artist only with suspicion). These should not be of the theatre but be widely knowledgeable on the English stage, of ripe judgment, yet remaining young of mind; capable of enthusiasm and energy. (Lest I be thought to picture gods, not men, I proffer the names of two—neither of whom have I spoken to for at least two years past: Sir Edward Marsh and Mr. Ivor Brown.)

The State must be forced to give "recognition" of its standing. It is essential that the dignity of a non-commercial theatre shall be not less than that of an obscure art gallery, school, or the like. If it can be persuaded into ensuring a rent-free theatre, so much the better, for, from experience, I assert that the amount of annual rent represents the exact amount of annual endowment on which such a theatre in London can be certain of survival. It must not be fobbed off with limited private endowment like the "Everyman," nor with limited Fund endowment like the "Old Vic." Surely, when it is possible again to turn from destruction to reconstruction some of the goodwill and financial backing that has been commanded by such bodies as the British Council, the C.E.M.A., not to mention the B.B.C., can be channelled to that Living English Theatre that still struggles for birth.

NORMAN MACDERMOTT

SIR,—Mr. John Gielgud has made the most authoritative and cogent plea for a British National Theatre which I have seen for a long time. Though much more might be said to fill out the picture, his article covers the main lines on which the Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre Committee was working before the war. How near the Committee was to the realisation of its aims may some day be revealed.

In the meanwhile, Mr. Gielgud's jest about the "excavated crater in South Kensington" seems a trifle out of season. To-day no theatre, not even the Old Vic, can be sure that it will not be reduced to a similar predicament. But the South Kensington crater has at least one advantage: upon it has been planned a stage technically suited for just such a dramatic policy as Mr. Gielgud desires. Of no existing West-End playhouse can the same be said. And is it seriously suggested that the Old Vic is fitted either in situation or structure to serve as our National Theatre? The times themselves are apocalyptic. Let us not be too modest in our vision. What surely will be needed after the war is a building that shall not only command the admiration of the world, but shall inspire both actors and audience to the heights of dramatic achievement and appreciation.

As to finance, it is true that the endowments of the Stratford Theatre are considerable; but they are not extravagant, and, being held on trust, could not properly be pooled in another venture. A joint directorate for Stratford and London, with a common acting personnel, is another matter, and Mr. Gielgud's suggestions in this regard are clearly of the first importance. The National Theatre Committee, be it said, is fully alive to such possibilities. It has always hoped that the National Theatre would be both hospitable and co-operative, as is shown by the fact that the stage at South Kensington has been carefully designed to accommodate the Stratford productions with a minimum of adjustment.

In conclusion I would add that the National Theatre scheme in its present form is the result of a long collaboration (as Mr. Gielgud recommends) between a number of the foremost theatre experts, actors and technicians of the day. If they have till now concentrated on the more material side of the problem, it is because of their conviction that adequate endowment and worthy setting are primary conditions for any theatrical undertaking which is to be both progressive and permanent. All through, in planning the theatre, practical utility has been the determining factor. Now that Mr. Gielgud has an easier opportunity than heretofore, I can only hope that he may feel moved to investigate for himself what has been already accomplished; and then perhaps he might be willing to contribute something of his own invaluable experience to the common stock. That would be a big step forward.

GEOFFREY WHITWORTH,
Hon. Secretary,
Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre
Executive Committee.

SIR,—In his stimulating article "A Living Theatre," Mr. Gielgud pays tribute to the rejuvenation of the Comédie Française and to the employment there of the services of the four famous producers of the *Cartel:* Copeau, Jouvet, Baty and Dullin. Discussing the difficulty of finding a "skilled impresario" to run the amalgamation of English theatrical talents which he proposes, Mr. Gielgud says: "a theatre might be led, as in France, by a group of brilliant directors," thus implying that the members of the *Cartel* were entirely responsible for the direction of the Théâtre Français. This, of course, was not the case. Not only were the services of many of the older directors maintained but the change of policy was brought about largely by the influence of the new Administrator-General, Edouard Bourdet, himself a distinguished and successful dramatist.

No one who had the opportunity of working with the members of the Comédie Française who gave a brilliant series of performances in London two years ago could have failed to notice the respect and admiration in which M. Bourdet was held by both players and staff. It was clear that, without someone possessed of sufficient knowledge, tact and personal distinction to hold the balance between old methods and new, the famous institution could not have been restored to life with such striking success.

It appears now that either the Germans have deposed Bourdet, or that he has resigned. Jouvet, Baty and Dullin are said to have resigned in sympathy, and the mantle of the Administrator-General seems to have fallen on the shoulders of the fourth member of the *Cartel*, Jacques Copeau.

RONALD CRICHTON

"BLACK RECORD"

SIR,—We do see THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION over here; and some of us have had the privilege of reading Sir Robert Vansittart's *Black Record*. The controversy on this subject in your columns arouses great mirth in the Dolphin and Bodega, where we loquacious Irishmen gather together to discuss the world, the flesh and the devil. Of course, the question of Irish neutrality comes up: and it may seem a little strange to you on the other side of the Channel that discussion about Eire's neutrality should become mixed with discussion about *Black Record*. Why, you may ask. I shall try to explain.

Vansittart's method of writing history has always been used by the Irish in their propaganda during that eight hundred years effort to rid themselves of the English. We naturally picked out the very worst things the English did to us—and Hitler and Himmler will be up against a difficult metaphysical problem if they should ever be in a position to try to go one better. If you have an enemy, why shouldn't he be painted in the worst possible light? If you start looking for his good qualities, you'll soon find excellent reasons why you should not be fighting him at all. And then, if he is powerful enough, he will most certainly down you. You cannot sit on the fence and be on each side of it at the same time. To us the English had to be a nation of humbugs, hypocrites, exploiters and oppressors—which indeed they were in Ireland—and were not to be represented by the many good Englishmen whom we know to exist. If you are fighting a country, 'tis always best to build up for yourself a picture of something to be hated and eliminated if possible. Time enough for good feelings to come in afterwards! That is what we did with England. When our problem was very largely solved, all ill-will disappeared; but not before. The propaganda of every successful movement in the world must be one-sided. In a discussion here the other day about Vansittart's *Black Record*, there was one point on which we all agreed: that so intelligent a man as the Diplomatic Adviser to His Majesty's Government, brought up in so unscrupulous and cynical a school as the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service, would not care one tinker's damn for the absolute and ultimate historical truth of a stroke of propaganda, so long as that stroke of propaganda is really effective. We also agreed on another point: that it is not really a very good piece of propaganda, except perhaps for that politically unconscious section of the English public represented by the vast semi-educated middle class. Furthermore, that if Goebbels is one-tenth as astute as we think he is, *Black Record* is a gift from the gods to him. He can use it to win over any potential Fifth Column among the German population.

How does Irish neutrality fit into all this? The Irish are saying that if Vansittart's picture of the Germans is the worst that so clever a man can produce, the Germans cannot be half so bad as our own history has taught us that the English are! From our point of view, according to their own showing, and their criticism of each other, and what we know of both, we don't want either the English or the Germans over here, interfering with our affairs. We have not forgotten that England once instituted a "New Order" in Ireland; that they bled this country white; that the English ruling class broke every solemn agreement whenever it suited their book, just as brazenly as either Hitler or Mussolini has done; that they all but enslaved us, and behaved here as "telegraph poles in the ground, which neither cast a benevolent shade nor took root to fertilise the soil." We had enough of that, and don't want any more of it either from Germany or from England. That is the background of Irish neutrality: England's Black Record.

But we do not fear England so much as Germany, because Germany built our Shannon hydro-electric scheme, knows every inch of it, and, in one night's raid on a far lesser scale than many recent raids on London or other places, can reduce to beggary all our little industries, all our excellent creameries and co-ops., and produce chaos and a complete black-out throughout Eire. One good raid on Dublin, Cork, Limerick and a few other places, would ruin us. England cannot defend herself too well against night raiders; she could do nothing against night raiders on Eire. So that we are genuinely afraid. Nor is our position improved by the fact that England cannot spare us *any* anti-aircraft guns, or ships to bring some from America; while American ships are forbidden to come to Eire and we have no mercantile marine of our own worth speaking of.

4 Crow Street,
Dublin, Eire.

CAHAL O'LAOGHAIRE,
Barrister-at-Law.

EIRE

SIR,—In your last issue a correspondent signing himself "Get on with the War" ("Wishful Thinker" would have been more apt and but little less original) discusses the relations between Great Britain and Eire. He suggests that Partition is the main reason for Eire's neutrality and expresses the hope that "Whitehall" will exert itself to persuade the Government of Northern Ireland to abandon its opposition to fusion with the South—the moment being opportune as the recent by-election in Down shows (it is claimed) that many people in the North are anxious to make this sacrifice.

I wish to point out:—

(1) No responsible politician or influential leader of public opinion in Eire has ever suggested that his country's policy of neutrality would be modified if Partition was abolished.

(2) The successful candidate in the by-election

is an Independent *Unionist* (the italics are mine but the candidate would approve them). He fought the election on the issue that "the Government was not sufficiently energetic in the prosecution of the war." If he had proposed the giving up of Partition he would have lost his deposit.

77 Langham Road, Teddington. D. R. SETAB

RENT PROFITEERING

SIR,—The Ministry of Health states that it is going to take steps to stop profiteering in rents for furnished rooms. If so, it will have to devise some method of dealing with a form of blackmail which is widespread in our reception areas. I will cite my own case in illustration.

I am renting half a furnished house at 37*s.* 6*d.* a week, including electricity for cooking and lighting. Hot water for baths, etc. is extra by a slot meter. I supply coal, table linen, towels and have had to supply a carpet, table, curtains and numerous other articles to make the rooms habitable. As the result of a demand for an increase in rent of 1*s.* I forced the following statement from my landlord of how he arrived at the rent.

Proportion for rent of rooms and rates	15/-
Electricity	2/6
Balance for furniture	20/-
Total	37/6

The total rent of the house is 20*s.* a week, rates about 5*s.* The value of the furniture is about £50 (landlord's estimate).

Having extracted this statement in which the extra shilling is allowed, the question of increased rent was dropped.

I learn from the Citizen's Advice Bureau that my landlord is liable for a fine of £100 and also that he can turn me out at a week's notice, whether there is other accommodation available or not. Consequently I cannot give evidence for a prosecution unless I risk being turned out and also jeopardise my chances of being offered other accommodation, since in a small town where my name is well known I should be branded as litigious and consequently an undesirable tenant. VICTIM

E.P.T.

SIR,—I thought that—the case for an adjustment of E.P.T. having been so universally acknowledged—further argument would be unnecessary; but Mr. Morgan Williams, casting aside angelic timidity, rushes in with a few irrelevancies, a little distortion and enough sophistry to suit his taste. All have bowed the knee to the Capitalist Baal save he alone.

The matter will be debated when the Finance Bill comes before the House; so it may be worth while to clear up a few abstractions.

We had better understand clearly that what a Labour Party Conference decided at Bournemouth or anywhere else has no more relevance to the present life and death struggle than "what Gladstone said in '68 (or whenever it was)." Mr. Churchill and his vast majority are not bound by Labour Conference decisions; neither for that matter are our Leaders—except the one decision to join a Coalition Government. Until some future decision rescinds that permit our Leaders in the Government are free men in the nation's service, and we must trust them. This means that Party policy is in cold storage; though, as Mr. Attlee so aptly put it recently, "not our brains."

But what of the resolution on "War Finance" which "calls for the immediate restriction of profit and the imposition of a levy on capital?" No honest critic will say that there has been unrestricted profit, and—as recently as the Budget debate last week—Pethwick Lawrence put forward a demand for a capital tax, and I myself supported him in my speech.

The Economist has shown that the aggregate of industrial net profits last year showed a considerable decrease. What is the use of being peevish about these things, and allowing a narrow ideological prejudice to restrict our outlook and usefulness?

I never suggested that shareholders should benefit by another 8 per cent. or anything like it. On the contrary, I went out of my way to suggest limitation of dividends. The 8 per cent. referred to was the residue of excess profits which should remain in the business as a special reserve, to meet all kinds of contingencies which arise, and which must be provided for if business is to be kept sound.

I for one expect Labour to govern in the future, and I do not want to see their fitness to govern imperilled by the inheritance of a derelict industrial system. Industrial correspondents would do well to give some thought to this matter.

Mr. Williams, questioning whether "stocks and shares work harder and justify greater reward to their owners" reveals a rather unworthy superficiality. The comparison he really wants is between Capital and Labour. Much as it may shock Mr. Williams, Capital can and does work overtime. Machines are capital, and it is perfectly certain that they "are working harder, have literally no rest," and will need "nourishment" (replacement) in exactly the same sense that the workers require extra physical nourishment. Both must be provided out of extra earnings, if sound business is to have any meaning at all. If, without any extra profit to shareholders (and I surely made myself quite clear on this point), I prefer to ensure that our "soldiers, sailors and airmen have more tools for their jobs," rather than stick religiously to 100 per cent. E.P.T., I do not think any intelligent critic will quarrel with me.

I agree unreservedly with Mr. Williams that "deliberate inefficiency can only be described as sabotage" and I certainly have "better ideas on how to deal with sabotage when it comes 'from above,'" In fact I have sounder ideas on this than are dreamed of in Mr. Williams' restricted ideology. But to do the right thing at the wrong time would be suicidal. ALFRED EDWARDS

House of Commons, Westminster, S.W.

"EXCESSIVE SENSIBILITY"

SIR,—In "A London Diary" of April 19th, my friend Mr. Raymond Mortimer refers to the inscription to the memory of Mrs. Sarah Fletcher in the great church of Dorchester, Oxon. Many years ago I discovered it hidden under the matting of the south transept, and I have published it as an example of our eighteenth-century feeling. I think it may have been in my book called *Rough Islanders*, but my house in London has been blasted out so that I cannot see the shelves. "Whose nerves were too delicately spun to bear the rude Shakes and Jostlings which we meet with in this transitory World. Nature gave way. She sank and died, a martyr to excessive sensibility." That exactly expresses the latter part of the eighteenth century. Someone on reading my quotation wrote to me saying that the poor young lady drowned herself in the Thames close by owing to the Shakes and Jostlings of her husband's infidelities. I think it probable that the husband composed the epitaph.

King's Arms, Campden, Glos. HENRY W. NEVINSON

"DIE ZEITUNG"

SIR,—Would you allow me to add a postscript to Mr. Fyvel's illuminating review of Dr. Rauschning's latest book *The Beast from the Abyss?*

While in complete agreement with regard to Mr. Fyvel's analysis of Herr Rauschning's political philosophy, I cannot see that *Die Zeitung* represents more than Herr Haffner, his co-editors and perhaps a certain quarter, if only ill-advised individuals, of the Ministry of Information. Certainly Herr Haffner and his few friends do not represent a "New Germany" or even a "free Germany under German Democrats and Socialists." Not a single German anti-Nazi with any political responsibility has contributed or will contribute to a paper which in its whole attitude is more Popish than the Pope and which has not hesitated to denounce *all* Germans to be only worthy of its "despicable pity" (see the issue of March 27th). One must be either very tactless or politically utterly inexperienced, possibly both, to denounce in such a way the people whose language one writes and whose culture and tradition one claims to represent.

It is difficult to see how a future solution of the German problem can be furthered by a paper which in its *present* shape can only be regarded as expensive and futile. GERMAN SOCIALIST

CHURCH MILITANT

SIR,—

"I deplore
The war,"
Said the Pope
In a Message of Hope. "FOX"

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Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

As is well known, conscription for military service, in peace and war, has not a long history in Europe. It dates from the French Revolution and was, of course, the basis of Napoleon's enormous military achievement. No other general in Europe could say, as he did to Metternich: "I can afford to lose 30,000 per month." Some years indeed passed before a population used to the unheroic pleasures of peaceful industry and far removed from memory of the massacres of the religious wars, became attracted to this pace of slaughter. Men fled from their houses in thousands, the Vendée rose in revolt. But in times of revolutionary fanaticism, persecution and espionage, the army becomes the safest hiding place; the glory of the Napoleonic conquests was irresistible and, with all Europe hungry, the discovery that you could pillage the conquered and live well off them was a final factor in making for the success of the new system. One has only to look at the memoirs of such rogues as Vidocq to see what a piping time the tougher conscripts had. Their European travels turned them into foreigners. They became a race apart. Though this is probably true of all soldiers. In his *Verdun*, M. Jules Romains shows that the common daydream of the men in the trenches was of somehow melting away from the front in little bands, retiring to the woods and living a kind of Robin Hood life on the tribute they exacted from civilians.

What was the life of Napoleon's first European conscripts? Some idea can be got from that old school-book *Histoire d'un Conscrit de* 1813 by Erckmann-Chatrian,* which is also published cheaply in English. (It is a pity one reads these two Alsatian collaborators at school, for while they are safe and exciting enough for schoolboys and inculcate a sound and civilised moral repugnance to Caesarism, they have qualities that schoolboys are not able to appreciate.) Neither Chatrian the glassmaker, who worked his way up in the world to become a school teacher, nor Erckmann, the clever, briefless lawyer, were Napoleonic conscripts. They were born a few years after Waterloo and they wrote of the campaigns and the revolution itself as those events still lived in the memories of their elders, picking up the old boasts and lamentations from humble and ordinary folk. They look at the war from below, assume in their stories the point of view of some small tradesman or peasant, and view the scene from the vantage-point of a period of disillusion. This pretence of being eye-witnesses and, with it, the circumstantial manner at which they excel, recalls *The Journal of the Plague Year*. Both books have that modest, trim, but firm respectability, the stoicism of the small trader. The meek shall inherit the earth. Joseph, the good, lame apprentice, working overtime to save up money in order to marry his innocent little Catherine whose hand he holds all the evening like a sugar stick, is an early example of the pious non-tough hero of the nineteenth century. He does not seem a prig to us because he is good without knowing it, or perhaps one should say that really his piety lies not in his religion but in his class itself. Sainte Beuve scornfully called this book "L'Iliade de la peur," but if Joseph is often as frightened as any young soldier is, he is certainly no coward. He stands his ground in the French squares, terrified by the screaming, monkey faces of the Prussian Hussars as they charge down at the Battle of Leipzig, but he is savagely angry that any man on earth should try and take away his life without consulting him and in a cause to which he is indifferent. "La Gloire" did not intoxicate Joseph. Before he went to his medical examination he swallowed a bottleful of vinegar, hoping to deceive the doctors, because he had been told this drink would make him look as pale as an invalid. In fact it gave him the violent flush of an enormously healthy face, and he regards his failure to get out of military service as a just punishment for acting a lie. Mild, one would call Joseph, very mild, yet really he has the pathos of the sensible man:

> "I wish those who love glory so much would go and find it themselves and not leave it to others."
>
> "To tell you the truth," said Zebedee, "I think the same as you do, but as they have got us it is better to say we are fighting for glory."

One reads all books on the Napoleonic period with one eye continually jumping forward to the present. The pacifist would naturally plump for a passage like the one I have quoted; but the moral of the book is political. It is a patriotic denunciation of despotism, and it is based upon descriptions of what the ordinary man and woman were saying and feeling at the time. Here, I think, those who are conducting anecdotal propaganda in Germany against Hitler might read *The History of a Conscript* with advantage. It is a book full of fruitful murmurs and suggestive ironies. Joseph joins up after the retreat from Moscow, and a wonderful public statement is issued in the town admitting, indeed almost boasting, of the catastrophe and calling for more sacrifices. After gloating on the losses the statement ends: "The health of the Emperor is excellent." Before the disaster in Russia became known the simple people of Alsace believed that now that Napoleon had got everything in Europe the war would be over. "You forget," the sardonic replied, "that there is still the conquest of China." One can imagine that being said in Germany. Erckmann-Chatrian were, of course, writing tendenciously after the event; but after all, France had seen the Revolution betrayed, and had paid a frightful price for her Führer. At the summit of conquest there is always uncertainty and guilt in the minds of the conqueror's followers. "It can't last." "We shall have to pay." But Joseph found himself shouting, "Vive l'Empéreur" with the rest, and could not explain why he shouted with such fervour for the man who had enslaved him.

The conscripts of 1813 went through very much the same experiences as the conscript of to-day. Joseph and his friends at once found themselves standing drinks to the old soldiers, whose thirst was boundless—the veterans were patronising and the conscripts were cocky. The foundations of military discipline have remained very much the same.

> The corporal is always right when he speaks to the private soldier, the sergeant is right when he speaks to the corporal, the sergeant-major when speaking to the sergeant, the sub-lieutenant to the sergeant-major, and so on upwards to the marshal of France—even if he were to say that the moon shines in broad daylight or that two and two make five.
>
> This is not an easy thing to get into your head, but there is one thing which is a great help to you, and that is a great noticeboard fixed up in the rooms, and which is read out from time to time, to settle your thoughts. This noticeboard enumerates everything that a soldier is supposed to want to do—such as, for instance, to return to his native village, to refuse service, to contradict his superior officer, etc., and always ends by promising he shall be shot or at least have five years' hard labour, with a cannon-ball fastened to his leg if he does it.

You then sold your civilian clothing and stood the corporals more drinks, "as it was as well to be friends with them, as they drilled us morning and afternoon in the courtyard." The drinks were served by Christine, an eternal figure.

> She showed particular consideration for all young men of good family, as she called those who were not careful of their money. How many of us were fleeced to their last sou in order to be called "men of good family."

Joseph has no adventures or affairs on the way. He is the normal man, the average recruit, who keeps as far from trouble as he can. He is thinking all the time of his dear Catherine; but Catherine, you feel pretty certain, is not going to be like the rest of the Phalsbourg girls, who turn round and marry someone else the moment their young man joins up and goes away. Joseph's day-long hope is that he won't be in the advance guard, that he won't have to kneel in the front rank of the square when the cavalry charge; and when he gets to billets he is worried about the state of his feet and always manages to awaken the sympathy of the household. The odd thing is that he has our sympathy, too. Erckmann-Chatrian succeed in making us prefer Joseph to the rasher and more virile Zebedee, who fights a duel with a veteran and kills him with his sabre. The reason for this preference is that Joseph, in his mildness, is exactly the right kind of narrator. His virtue, after all, is not that of the best boy in the Sunday school; it is the virtue of everyday life, the *virtu* of peace set against the *virtu* of war. Such a humble figure shows up the gaudy chaos of war in dramatic contrast. Who does not respond to Joseph's description of his first action when he came under artillery fire?

> A tremendous cloud of smoke surrounded us and I said to myself if we remain here a quarter of an hour longer we shall be killed without a chance of defending ourselves. It seemed hard that it should be so.

Another point that occurs to me when I read either this book or *A Story of a Peasant* (also published in Everyman and a book that describes all the phases of the Revolution as they affected a peasant) is that the modern literature of war and revolution has become intensely egotistical. What "*I*" said, what "*I*" did, what happened to "me." The modern books from Blunden to Hemingway are all far more horrifying than Erckmann-Chatrian, and I wonder how much this is due to their exceptional, personal point of view. For I do not think that the entire explanation is that modern war has become more horrifying. Erckmann-Chatrian can be grim. There is the moment, for example, when a soldier will not believe he has lost his arm until he sees it lying among a pile of amputated arms and recognises it by the tattoo mark. But usually the authors are sparing with this kind of particularity. Although a conscript or a peasant is writing, the predominant pronoun is "we" and not "I"; he is writing of all the peasants, all his friends, all the soldiers. The private sensibility is merged with the general and we get a sensibility to the feelings of crowds and masses which was to become one of the marks of nineteenth-century literature, and which we have lost. When Erckmann-Chatrian were writing, this had not degenerated into an only too convenient means of melodrama and the vague picturesque. The simplicity and sincerity of the eighteenth century gave the Erckmann-Chatrian "we" a real humanity, a genuine sentiment, a moral charm. The tough first person singular hero of to-day is rich in knowingness; he knows the ropes far better than a softie like Joseph; but the tough man is poor in feeling, for the Romantic movement has intervened to make his feelings seem both larger and more catastrophically injured than they really are. Morbidity and insincerity are never far off. This poverty has extended to the tough man's awareness of his comrades, for he is afraid of betraying himself before them. There are signs in occasional unpretentious narratives which I have read on this war, and the Spanish civil war, of a welcome softening of the first person singular. I think that writers who are doing such narratives could glance again at Erckmann-Chatrian with advantage.

V. S. PRITCHETT

* *The History of a Conscript of* 1813 *and Waterloo*, by Erckmann-Chatrian (Everyman Library, 2*s.* 6*d.*).

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This is a list of books by Virginia Woolf, published by The Hogarth Press and available at all booksellers.

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The Hogarth Press also publishes the following paper-bound booklets by Virginia Woolf:

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YEATS

The Poetry of W. B. Yeats. By LOUIS MACNEICE. *Oxford University Press.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Yeats is unique among poets because he first responded to immediate human discomfort and suffering in middle age instead of in youth. When he was between forty and fifty—in what Mr. MacNeice calls his period "of occasional and disillusioned poetry"—he became acutely aware of the world around him; he woke and did not like what he saw. As a youth and a young man he does not seem to have suffered, except through the vicarious forms of ancestral heroes; and now that experience came to him, and suffering with it, the suffering was different in quality from what it would have been if it had come twenty years earlier; less easy to bear in one way, for it was without the confused hopes and illusions of youth; easier to bear in another, for in the forties and fifties a man's character is set, and he has acquired the habit of confronting disagreeable things with some degree of pragmatical courage. Youth may bend beneath the pain of experience, because it is resilient and can rise again; but the suffering of middle-age is tough and corrugated, and its only resource is to lay about it with a stick. If it bends it will never be able to straighten itself again; it knows that its fight is the last fight. When Yeats woke to the world of his time, an adverse and destructive world, his only hope was to maintain himself, never to yield; and his aristocratic coldness, his rancour, his occasional ribaldry, which was dry and cynical, the hard-bitten Rabelaisianism of a dauntless maiden aunt, were necessary weapons of attack in a defensive action, whose astonishing success all his age admired. He is an inspiring figure because, taking up the combat at such a belated point, he held out, showing the finest temper; and the spectacle is all the more astonishing because, as Mr. MacNeice suggests, his personality as a poet, a philosopher and a man was to some extent a self-made one.

Mr. MacNeice's criticism flows round his subject, pretty much as the conversation of a number of intelligent people, gathered together, might eddy and flow; he rarely sees one aspect of Yeats without seeing a number more, and he states all of them with an admirable sense of their relative importance. The result of this discursive method is a number of impressions which, when they settle in one's mind, clarify into a general impression which is Mr. MacNeice's evaluation of the poet. It is an evaluation that cannot be summarised in a short review, for it depends on an exceptional variety of observation; and the justice of the observation is what makes the book remarkable. Mr. MacNeice, to take one point, is particularly good on the difficult problem of Yeats's sincerity. He concedes that Yeats pretended to mystical experience because he believed in mysticism, and faked a legend about his family because he believed in aristocracy. He suspects that Yeats's passion, too, is sometimes faked. But he comes to the conclusion that Yeats, as a poet, "is characterised by integrity," and there is no disagreeing with that conclusion. He tries to explain the contradiction by a brief analysis of what sometimes happens when ordinary experience is translated into poetry; but one imagines that it could be accounted for even better by Yeats's idea of what a poet should be, and Yeats's determination to be all that a poet should be. A poet must be above the ordinary ruck, so Yeats's ancestors had to be of good family; a poet must have mystical experience, so Yeats claimed mystical experience as a natural right. He set out from the start to create himself in the image of the poet; and in all the claims which he made for himself as a poet, there was at any rate an integrity of the will. This mixture of pretension and integrity makes him an extraordinarily difficult poet to judge; his later poetry is so much better than his earlier because the will comes forward in it, and one recognises the source of his integrity. But one can feel it, too, in the deliberate softness of his early poetry; one has the feeling all the time that he is making himself in the image of the poet. He remained to the end an æsthete; in the two magnificent poems about Byzantium he pictures himself spending eternity as a golden bird singing on the bough, or, in Mr. MacNeice's words, "a work of art producing works of art." We do not think of him in his later phase as an æsthete, for we find it hard to picture an æsthete as a man of hard and tough character.

Mr. MacNeice's final word on Yeats is the only unsatisfactory thing in the book. "The spiritual lesson that my generation (a generation with a vastly different outlook) can learn from Yeats is to write according to our lights." But otherwise the book is crammed with the most acute observation, and is one of the most brilliant critical works which have appeared for some time.

EDWIN MUIR

NEW NOVELS

The Ocean. By JAMES HANLEY. *Faber and Faber.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Butterfly. By MARTIN ARMSTRONG. *Collins.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

King's Row. By HENRY BELLAMANN. *Cape.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Herr Witch Doctor. By SARAH GERTRUDE MILLIN. *Heinemann.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Madame Dorthea. By SIGRID UNDSET. *Cassell.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The Cottage. By CRICHTON PORTEOUS. *Michael Joseph.* 8*s.*

Hocus Pocus. By NOEL LANGLEY. *Methuen.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

"Isn't life frightful, M. Vollard!" said Cézanne. Isn't it just. And these seven books taken one after the other more than illustrate just how frightful. Which is the most depressing, the serious or the flippant, the mediocre or the vicious, the suggestive or the outrageous? Murder, rape, incest, sadism, political intrigue, self-interest, squalor, priggishness and greed—enough headlines for a whole month of daily papers; enough brutality for the next six Hemingways. And it is Hemingway who has licensed the tough and made gruff laconicism the highest aim of all writers with a story to tell when they have more appreciation than judgment.

Brilliant only in the hands of its populariser, laconicism should, like the intricacies of Henry James or the elaboration of Carlyle, remain a literary incident. James Hanley is a person who has had a variety of experience, has enough sensibility to profit by it and enough imagination to add to it. But the very genuineness of his material has given him an inflated reputation. *The Ocean* is at once pretentious and not ambitious enough. It was a temptation to use the formula of understatement for the story of five men in the boat of a torpedoed ship, short of food and water, in a calm but hopeless sea, waiting to be picked up. Only one is a seaman. The others are passengers: an aged priest (with the regrettably usual child-like eyes), a business man, a schoolmaster, and a very young man. Shock, terror, sickness and a complete sense of personal inadequacy overwhelm the passengers. An earlier experience of the effects of long waiting in cramped quarters on those unused to any kind of endurance fills the thoughts of Curtain, the sailor. He knows that he will have to control the whole boatload and that it is he who will be trusted, blamed and suspected alternately. The young man's delirious dream of the cockroach and the tender

incident of the whale are beautiful heightenings and relaxings of the tension, and beautifully related. For the rest, the clipped flat boredom of the sentences is only just all right—it takes a good snap of the affair, but I should have preferred a painting.

The Butterfly is drawing-room vice. The moral is crude but well-established—"if you are a lady and you speak to strange men something terrible will happen to you." Something terrible does happen to Caroline Bepton, spinster, who allows her middle-aged desire for excitement to overwhelm her natural fastidiousness and her inculcated discretion. It is written with a rather tired competence and some grace, making good use of novel paraphernalia, boarding-houses, piers, relatives and the melting, grey compulsion of a selfish lover's eyes. It will not add to or detract from Mr. Armstrong's deservedly literary reputation.

King's Row is not tired, it is indefatigable in its slow unfolding of vice in a growing border town in America. For anyone who has been appalled and terrified by the preoccupations of the young, moderately intelligent, provincial American it has the fascination of familiarity. A hysterical interest in sex, so that every bush, every bench, every view and every idle stream are the witnesses of illicit and usually unsuccessful love; an almost equally hysterical fear of perversion of every kind and its natural consequence, a romantic interest in the psychologist (the doctor in America has very nearly the same romance attached to him as the explorer in Europe) pervade the book. It is a gently told tale of a boy's growth to manhood and his preparation to become a doctor. It is interesting, not because of the savagery and small town meannesses it reveals, but because of the naive indignation of its author. It is very much too long.

There is no excuse for the pedestrian humourless dreariness of *Herr Witch Doctor*, even if it is about the Nazis. The wickedness of the Nazi plan for Africa in the present war could have been far more effectively pointed out in a pamphlet. Surely there ought to be some maturing, if not fermentation, of the material before attempting to serve it up in a novel. It is very serious that German missionaries should play up to African mumbo-jumbo and introduce a new magic of their own to excite and confuse the natives but it doesn't make good reading.

Madame Dorthea belongs to the stench and wench school of eighteenth century tales. There is a sweet-smelling domestic Norwegian background and the laughing stampede of a first-class village wedding—little plot and less entertainment.

The *Daily Mail* March choice, *The Cottage*, has the pleasant boredom of an appreciative chat with a local—which I believe is just what it is. Mr. Porteous is unhurried, he knows and likes the country, he knows the kind of thing that happened in a Victorian farmhouse near Manchester and he tells it without guile. His language has not the artless clarity and enthusiasm of a born but uneducated writer, it has rather the conventional unsparkling character of an acquired diction:

> The woods, lit by faint white sunlight, showed a variety of shades which enabled him to pick out the different trees even in the far mass. A slightly ruddy tint meant beech, a more purple tint meant rowan. Ash were grey green, oak much darker. . . . Half a mile away south-eastwards, suddenly, above the approximately level line of the woodland five wood-pigeons rose at a steep angle, then flattened their line of approach. . . .

The Victorian father's confusion of a personal desire for power with what must be best for his children is the not unusual point of the book.

A bogus American book finishes the list. As I shut *Hocus Pocus* the woman in the opposite

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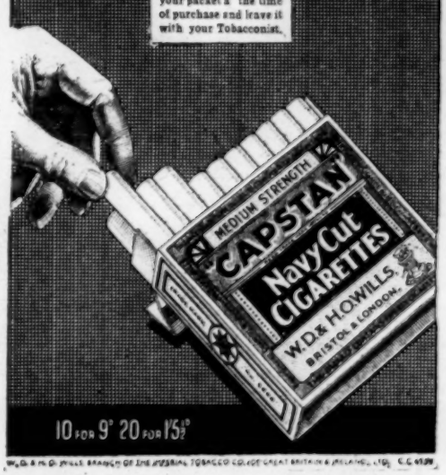

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corner leant forward and said "Excuse me, but is it as good as the last?" I don't know. It is the rattle-on-with-the-hottest-slang-you-know-and-it'll-sound-convincing kind of book. It does really. It is what we like to think all Americans are like. The theme is Hollywood trickery. And it is heavily peppered with suggestive words for things not usually mentioned in public. "Wickedly amusing," as the wrapper says, if it amuses you to be wicked.

MYFANWY PIPER

MARXISM DISSECTED

Marxism—Is It Science? By MAX EASTMAN. *Allen and Unwin.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Eastman's vigorous book will only disturb those to whom Marxism has become a body of immutable dogmas to be guarded as though it were the Bible in Tennessee or the Koran in Mecca. To others, who remember that it is fifty years and more since Marx died, and that the study of the social sciences has not stayed still in the interval, it is a healthy and refreshing challenge to examine anew basic principles in a time when events have called all dogmas into question.

Mr. Eastman's main attack is on those who seek to make of Marxism a religion the ideas in which are not subject to the laws of change. He has no difficulty, I think, in demonstrating certain things. He is right in his argument that much of the Hegelian heritage in Marx is so much dead lumber that has led to confusion and not to clarity. With this view must go, I think, the admission that a good deal of what, among the faithful, is called dialectical materialism is in large part mumbo-jumbo, and, where it is valid, merely a complicated name for a commonsense approach to social analysis. I agree with him, too, if I may say so, in arguing that Marxian economic analysis is far from clear, and that it is difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile some of the contradictions in the different parts of *Capital*. The challenge Marx made to the classic economic theory had considerable validity on its own ground; a new economic world needs a new economic doctrine to fit the changed circumstances. Mr. Eastman is, I think, less happy in his discussion of the Marxian theory of history. Intricate epistemological questions apart, it is difficult not to accept the view that no key to the study of historical causation has been more fruitful or more profound than that which Marx provided. And his insistence that no class ever abdicates voluntarily from its possession of power has still to be disproved by experience. Marx, I believe, was unscientific in his belief in the inevitable victory of the proletariat. But his general approach to the nature of the State, his insistence on the subjugation of reason to the interests by which it is dominated at any given time, is, I think, the most helpful approach so far made to the central problem of politics.

The two final parts of Mr. Eastman's book are a brilliant analysis of the use made of Marx by Lenin, and of Trotsky's effort to maintain the rigour of his orthodox Marxism. In the first, Mr. Eastman has no real difficulty in showing that the different approaches of Marx and Lenin was the difference between the construction of a theoretical student of principles and a practical engineer concerned with their adaptation to rapidly changing material. Marx's genius lay in his power of abstract formulation; Lenin's in his superb practical concreteness. There are in Marx at once romantic and Utopian elements from which, in his statesmanship, Lenin was largely free; and these elements in Marx emphasise the degree to which he was a child of the Enlightenment, only partially released from its habits of thought. It is also fair to insist, as Mr. Eastman insists, on the failure, so far, of Marxism to come to terms with the discoveries of modern psychology. I add that Mr. Eastman's chapter on Trotsky is as able as it is amusing.

The importance of the book is unquestionable. It is, indeed, rather a programme of points to be considered, than a systematic examination of their implications. But it is always arresting and always intelligent; and its scholarship is on a high level. The book is the more interesting because it provides a clue to the curious deadness of Communist analysis before the living issues of the current scene. Once it is assumed that truth necessarily resides in Moscow, rational analysis is not less a prisoner of faith than when it is insisted that truth resides necessarily in Berlin or Rome. No one believes the latter view; it is a pity that anyone believes the former.

From the table of contents it appears that the American edition of this book contains an appendix in which Mr. Eastman deals, no doubt in his own pungent way, with Professor Hook's attempt to make Marx a precursor of John Dewey. It is irritating to have the reference, and then to discover that, in my copy, at least, the appendix is omitted from the English edition.

HAROLD J. LASKI

SPOOK BOOK

Haunted England. By CHRISTINA HOLE. *Batsford.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Here goes, the blurb promises us, for terror and romance. But in fact the inside of this book shows a fine control of the use of adjectives like uncanny, and a happy avoidance of Celtic wailing. Any declension into old-fashioned shudders is offset by the sophisticated decorations of Mr. John Farleigh. Instead, apparitions are paraded in their respective classes and age groups merely as they happen in popular belief in different parts of England, and the author barely obtrudes an opinion about their authenticity. Neither the most sceptically minded nor the most heady devotee of the planchette has got anything to complain about. This is just the raw material, not too raw. Indeed, quite tender.

Ghosts are an institution, like *Punch* and Christmas. In fact, they are too often part of the *Punch*-and-Christmas racket, and if you don't like institutions you find them rather boring. On the other hand, you can be dated and whimsical, and like them. Or you can get the best of both worlds, and investigate them for the public prints in the blessed name of psychical research. In any case, most people like to "explain" them, and at the moment there are three popular alternatives, discounting mere hysteria. First of all, it is possible to adopt the historical, anthropological approach, and to point out how many ghost stories are merely pre-Christian hang-overs—folk memories of Woden's fiery horses of the night, or of local deities who failed to be accepted into the hagiology when Christianity moved in. In the same way, many local traditions and beliefs had an artificial boom, as they served the ends of smugglers, body snatchers or house agents in the Highlands. Secondly, ghosts can be interpreted as the results of psychic disturbance, set up by the release of particularly intense passions, and available, objectively or subjectively, to the receptive. This field of approach allows for every possible sort of person, from the orthodox student of the occult to the most cocksure reader of popular manuals on the glands. Thirdly, ghosts can be seen as a manifestation of a mass desire for marvels, especially at times of great religious credulity or religious scepticism: if there had not been ghosts it would have been necessary to invent them. In all forms their appeal owes a tremendous amount to the power of fiction. In the country ghosts are traditions of the people:

in towns they are psychical experiences; but it was the skeleton-and-chain-gang of fiction who produced the popular ghost, ranging down from Apuleius to the nineteenth century, and the elegant excesses of "The Skeleton Clutch; or the Goblet of Gore." The application of Hemingway to Voodoo has as yet hardly reached the readers of the funny weeklies.

Miss Hole ignores the influence of literature, and is concerned only with beliefs which have been accepted purely on evidence or tradition. She points out herself how weak some of the stories are: "... a bedridden man at Knaphill, Bucks, heard someone lifting the latch of the door three nights in succession. Each time he waited with his stick in his hand for the intruder to come in, but no one did. Very soon afterwards his father died." Or the woman of Perranzabuloe who stole some teeth from a churchyard and heard a spectral voice under her window that night crying "Give me back my teeth! Give me back my teeth!" It must have been a very bored countryside which dilated these experiences into terror or romance. Most of the stories in fact are, stripped of the adjectives and the literary suspense, pretty thin. Most of them, too, are variations on a few themes, or new versions of the stock ones—Hamlet's father in modern dress. Woden's fiery posse becomes a phantom coach and later (as Miss Hole might have pointed out) the Ghost Lorry which cluttered lanes in the home counties during the silly-seasons of the 'twenties.

But the bloodstain still won't quite come out of the floor. There remains any amount of material here for the writer to quarry in, the anthropologist to call on, the psychical research student to analyse, and the ordinary subscription reader, if not to shudder at, at least to read with tolerable pleasure. There are family ghosts, animal ghosts, ghosts with a purpose and ghosts with a past, as well as a full chorus of poltergeists and screaming skulls. They are assembled from many sources, and if not what can be called a comprehensive collection, they do anyhow give a useful geographical survey of the distribution in England of some representative ghouls. It is not a particularly alarming array. But, after all, just now reality is more disturbing than apparitions.

I am sorry, though, that there are no spectres from the lake. I used to enjoy those clothes that would not dry. Drip, drip, they used to go.

PENNETHORNE HUGHES

THE OPERATION DYNAMO

The Nine Days Wonder. By JOHN MASEFIELD *Heinemann. 3s. 6d.*

In this brief, workmanlike account of the Evacuation from Dunkirk, Mr. Masefield performs an act of rescue hardly less skilful than the operation he describes. From the inflationary zone of the newspaper report and the publisher's blurb—where superlatives zoom as thick as dive-bombers and headlines scream in every phrase—he brings back a plain, exact narrative of The Operation Dynamo (as the lifting was officially called), and places it unemphatically and justly among the great achievements of our people.

It is not so difficult for the layman to appreciate the endurance, the courage, the resource displayed on the beaches themselves and in the Channel. Less obvious is the magnitude of the feat as a piece of improvised organisation:

> Even in peace the business would not have been too easy. Tell even a skilled contractor that he is to send shipping forty-odd miles to ship over 300,000 men within a fortnight from one beach and one jetty, and bring them back the forty-odd miles; give him one week for preparation and another week for the deed, and how likely would he be to do it?

The conditions of war complicate the movement incalculably. Every ship that can float is already in use in important national service. Boats have to be not only gathered but equipped with instruments, charts, food, water, fuel, weapons, ammunition. Once in use they have to be maintained, refuelled and very often refitted, for as likely as not a ship's equipment would be shot away on its first crossing. "The operation called into use 125 maintenance craft in addition to all the carriers." Then again the operation was continuously complicated by the changing circumstances of the battle on land. At the beginning the lifting of a few thousand men was alone envisaged. On the second day things went so badly that the plan came to be thought of as a desperate scramble to pick up survivors. Then the successful rearguard action made it possible to hope that the whole expeditionary force might be saved.

> But on the fifth day when special effort was being made to lift the rearguard of the B.E.F., the whole arrangement was cancelled so that the French might be brought to England instead. ... In the end more than 123,000 Frenchmen were brought to England. This made the entire operation at least one-third bigger than anyone had thought possible, and this enormous increase in the work came suddenly upon those responsible after five frightful days, and at a time when death and destruction had thinned out the beach-parties and smashed and sunk countless boats and many ships.

After an exact description of the geography and of the conditions under which the lifting took place, Mr. Masefield proceeds to a day-by-day narrative of the operation. The complex events of the action by sea, air and land are brought into an orderly clear line, and the plain story which results makes an impression which no amount of decoration or puffing could en-

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IT'S RICH IN VITAMIN 'B'

BEST BAKERS BAKE IT

hance. Woven into the narrative are extracts from ship's logs and the personal accounts of survivors; these are equally remarkable for their simple exactitude. Mr. Masefield's prose is simple, strong and supple as a ship's rope. In handling the countless acts of heroism performed in that ten days he might be accused of understating. But his understatement is very different from the American kind which leaves a strong taste of sentiment in the mouth. He uses it to extend our understanding of a scene where the heroic so often consisted in the dumb patience of waiting and enduring—in standing up to the shoulders in water for eight hours on end to help others into boats or in lying on the sand beneath appalling fire waiting for the darkness to give cover to the ships.

The two or three rather indifferent verses which Mr. Masefield includes in this little volume seem to suggest that poetry is not at the moment a medium which can be used to celebrate great events. But the Poet Laureate is certainly fulfilling one function of his office when he relates with such telling simplicity the story of this Evacuation and when, in doing it, he keeps the language clean and spare and stripped for action. *The Nine Days Wonder* should be a set book for all journalists and writers on the war. It will, in any case, be read continuously by future generations.

T. C. WORSLEY

FIRST THE SOIL

Soil and Sense. By MICHAEL GRAHAM. *Faber and Faber. 7s. 6d.*

There is too much chemistry about our cosmos. We think about the mineral salts in the soil and forget the living earth. We lavish our care on sick animals and plants and ignore the needs of the healthy ones. Amid a host of academic experiments in the growing of crops and the feeding of animals those concerned with the practical running of a whole farm are omitted.

This is the general theme of an opportune book on agriculture that cannot be too widely read in town and country at the present time. For at long last we seem to have realised that the basis of a permanent policy for the land must be based not upon the number of unemployed we can banish to the rural wastes, nor upon the amount of food we can prevent people sending us from abroad: but upon the preservation and fertility of our most lasting and primary asset . . . the soil.

Mr. Graham leads the lay reader skilfully to the understanding of so complex a subject as soil fertility by way of the garden, and we are nearly all gardeners now. The beauty of the lily growing from manure is not incredible, because manure, though not so lovely, looks as if it were rich enough to provide the armoury of pigments, waxes and essences that go to make the flower. We could do with more of this talk about manure in an age where some even think they can dispense with the soil in growing vegetables.

Two main methods of maintaining the fertility of the soil are discussed in this book: (1) the use of artificial fertilisers; (2) the system known as "ley farming," or "alternate husbandry," which consists of ploughing up our grass meadows from time to time, taking a crop or two of corn and roots, then re-sowing to grass. The artificial fertiliser method is examined and found wanting.

> The soil is alive and men who understand the art of partnership with living things find it difficult to believe in anything so simple as putting down a bag of fertiliser to pick up a bag of wheat.

In wartime, when we must grow every ounce of food we can, such expedients may be a necessity; but, from the point of view of a permanent policy, Mr. Graham's contention is that, if humus and fertility are to be maintained, quite as much natural manure must be used as if the crop were grown without artificials. Therefore artificials are superfluous.

As regards ley farming, several chapters give proof of the excellent results accruing to the soil, stock, crops and grass from this policy of ploughing that we must now pursue of necessity. It cannot, however, be regarded as a complete and general policy for all Britain, says the author, because of the climate in some parts of eastern Britain and because the bullock is needed to eat off grass too rough for dairy cattle, and this requires more arable farming to produce straw for bullocks. It is possible that, in this respect, Mr. Graham underestimates the adaptability of ley farming, both in producing a good sward under unfavourable circumstances and in producing straw for bullocks. I have seen excellent results on the fringe of what he calls the danger area, from the climatic point of view: and the beauty of the system is its flexibility, for the grass can be left down for any period from two years to fifteen or twenty. But the interesting thing is to find this support for bullocks and the plough as the essential features in any sound farming system; for, in the bad years before this war, they were the two aspects of agriculture that we most neglected.

L. F. EASTERBROOK

NORMAN SHAW

Richard Norman Shaw. By SIR REGINALD BLOMFIELD. *Batsford. 12s. 6d.*

Sir Reginald Blomfield uses his pen like a broadsword, so that even the ranks of Tuscany can scarce forbear to cheer. He calls the Regent Street Quadrant "the most distinguished street in London," exquisitely undisturbed by the fact that he designed seven-eighths of it himself. (I may add that in my opinion his Country Fire Office, which ends the Quadrant, has some claim to be the ugliest building erected in the West End since the last war.) He declares that the agitation which prevented him pulling down Carlton House Terrace and replacing it with a design of his own was "just a social stunt." For he considers Nash a vulgar architect, and really cannot conceive that our admiration for Nash is just as sincere as his own admiration for Sir Reginald Blomfield. His blindness to the most obvious facts is indeed so magnificent that he can blandly write of *The Architectural Review* (indisputably the leading architectural journal) in these terms: "What has become of the paper since then I do not know, but I believe it still exists." *The Architectural Review*, you see, is a strong supporter of the "Modernism" that is Sir Reginald's *bête noire*.

The charm of this book, consequently, depends less upon the validity of the author's judgment than upon the exuberance of his character. The generosity with which he praises Norman Shaw is prodigious. Not only is Scotland Yard the finest public building erected in London since Somerset House, but Norman Shaw—Sir Reginald informs us without a smile—was a more sensitive artist than Wren. The extravagance of this opinion is enchanting. For while Shaw's vigour made him a better architect than most of his contemporaries, sensibility was just the virtue that he most conspicuously lacked. Look at the coarse arch, broken pediment and obelisk so illiterately fastened on to the gable beside the engaged turret of Scotland Yard. Is it not surrealist in its incongruity?

Norman Shaw was born in 1831. After training in the Royal Academy School he worked in the office of Street, the architect of the Law Courts. He soon won a reputation by designing a number of remarkably horrible houses, which exactly met the taste of his clients, the Royal Academicians of the seventies. In these he succeeded in combining half-timbered Olde Worldiness with the *parvenu* floridity of Nuremberg. Sir Reginald, who, to do him justice, does not care for the sham medieval, calls these monstrosities "essentially English." One does not need to be a Jingo to resent such an insult to the country that has produced the Chiltern manors and Perpendicular churches, the Palladian mansion and the Regency Terrace. Shaw gradually moved towards a more sensible idiom, building those brick houses on Chelsea Embankment and in Queen's Gate which marry Queen Anne with Northern Renaissance. Despite their faults they are among the best domestic architecture of the late Seventies and Eighties. In 1878 he had designed the miniature Garden City of Bedford Park, which with all its artiness remains a highly creditable achievement. In 1890 he built, for Lord Portman, Bryanston, based upon the manner of the admirable Coleshill. (In the interior, as an illustration in this book shows, Shaw pursued originality with distressing results.) In the following year he produced Chesters, near Hexham, which, as far as I can judge without having seen it, was his most felicitous achievement; and it is a pity that Sir Reginald does not give us more photographs of it. Shaw's last years were saddened by the difficulties of his plan for the Regent Street Quadrant. His designs for the Piccadilly Hotel (1905) were enormously admired, and the building expresses Shaw's characteristic magniloquence. But the design was recklessly expensive, and did not provide shopkeepers with that maximum of glass windows on the ground floor on which they perhaps shortsightedly insisted. The Crown therefore did not proceed with Shaw's design for the rest of the Quadrant; and in due course Sir Reginald gave us the buildings that we now, so to speak, enjoy. At least these have the prime virtue

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of being planned as a whole, whereas the rest of Regent Street, owing to the short-sighted avarice of the Woods and Forests Department, is an ignoble farrago of *façades* that have little in common except their insignificance and vulgarity.

Norman Shaw's architecture, though greatly superior to that of his contemporaries, is typical of the Late Victorian Age. It is opulent, vehement, and cocksure. It possesses the grandiosity of Elgar's music, the ostentatiousness of Sargent's painting, the insensitiveness of Kipling's verse. It is fitting that his life should have been written by Sir Reginald Blomfield, who has inherited so many of his master's virtues, and who reveals the same vitality in his books if not always in his buildings.

R. M.

From Cabin-Boy to Archbishop. By ARCHBISHOP ULLATHORNE. *Burns Oates.* 15s.

Mr. Shane Leslie and Messrs. Burns Oates deserve our gratitude for this new edition of Archbishop Ullathorne's Memoirs, which have previously appeared only in a bowdlerised version. The Archbishop is chiefly known for the courage with which he defended Newman against the machinations of Manning. On one occasion he said to the Cardinal, who was of course his ecclesiastical superior, "My dear sir, allow me to say that I taught the Catechism with the mitre on my 'ead when you were a 'eretic!" His autobiography contains much material which is of highly specialised interest about the squabbles between the Catholic authorities in England a hundred years ago, before the restoration of the Hierarchy, but the first half of the book can be strongly recommended to the general reader. Ullathorne sprang from an old Catholic family that had come down in the world; he went to sea for some years before becoming a Benedictine. Indeed, he was not confirmed till he was twenty-three. At the age of twenty-seven he was sent as Vicar General to New South Wales, which was a part of the diocese of Mauritius. (This was the largest diocese in the world, including South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and all the Pacific islands.) Here his work lay chiefly among the convicts, many of whom were Irish deported for political offences. When he returned to England he gave evidence about the evils attendant upon the Transportation system before a Parliamentary Committee, and helped to secure its abolition. Ullathorne combined sturdy sense with great moral and physical courage, and these qualities are reflected in the style in which he described his grim experiences. Mr. Shane Leslie compares him with Defoe. But on occasion the writing rises to surprising heights, as in this childhood recollection:

> I remember also the impression first made on me by a Greek statue. It was a Flora, standing amongst rich foliage, and it literally dropped honey. For the bees had formed their combs within her wreath. The colourless creature seemed to sleep with open eyes, in her beauty as she stood, and I suppose it was one of my earliest lessons in mental abstraction, for she seemed to me to be a spirit of a different world from that I lived in, a spirit with whom one could have no communication of speech, though she seemed to think even in her sleep. She simply made me very silent.

Another passage neatly summarises the particular dangers to which the Religious Orders are liable, by leaning too much upon some particular virtue—the defects of its qualities.

> The temper of the Benedictine Order is largeness of spirit, or freedom, apt to degenerate into laxity. That of St. Francis is poverty, apt to degenerate into sordidness. That of St. Dominic is rigid law and science, apt to degenerate into the stiffness of the letter and pride of intellectual culture. That of St. Francis de Sales is spiritual sweetness, apt to degenerate into spiritual softness. That of the Carmelites is contemplation, apt to degenerate into leaving Our Lord's Life and Passion into abeyance. That of the Society of Jesus is the practical, apt to discard the contemplative spirit, and to degenerate into policy.

Archbishop Ullathorne played an important part in the restoration of the English Hierarchy, but he represented the anti-ultramontane, not to say Gallican, tradition of the old Catholics, which that restoration was to destroy. The present edition contains a number of small mistakes, and it is not

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GEO. WRIGHT.

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clear whether these are due to the editor's scrupulousness in presenting the original text, mis-spellings and all, or merely to negligence.

Poetry (London). Edited by TAMBIMUTTU. January and March Numbers. 1s. each.

It is difficult enough at any time to edit a magazine devoted entirely to poetry. Mr. Tambimuttu has undertaken the feat in wartime, and these are the fourth and fifth numbers of *Poetry*. Some of the faults of the "small publication" are rather obvious; thus Mr. Tambimuttu begins his editorial letter in Number 4 with a "thank you, David" which sets the tone for inner circles; and there is some floundering in myth and psycho-analysis. But both of these numbers contain notable contributions. The March–April issue begins with an article by Mr. Herbert Read analysing the state of mind in which poetry is written and concluding that in politics the poet must be anarchist; the trend of other articles, too, is away from objectivity in politics. Among the poems, the best are "A Childhood" by Stephen Spender and the six sonnets by George Barker. The sonnets—each containing a "character" on the Auden model—are interesting examples of what Mr. Barker can do when he is not beset by nightmare, and suggest that his American stay may produce a clearer phase.

Week-end Competitions

No. 586

Set by Thomas Smallbones.

A first prize of Two Guineas and a second of Half-a-Guinea are offered for a set of maxims (in prose) on any *six* of the following subjects: Irrational guilt feelings, the average man, the use of cosmetics, the enjoyment of danger, egocentricity, free speech, the pleasure of pessimism, universal education, progress.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, May 5th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 583

Set by Cyril Connolly

It has become the habit of some critics to couple the names of Joyce and Proust. We offer the usual prizes for a piece of Joyce written by Proust (a note, for instance, on the Salon of Mrs. Bloom) or of Proust written by Joyce (e.g. Buck Charlus). Entry not to exceed 250 words, Proust in the Scott-Moncrieff version.

Report by Cyril Connolly

This competition had a record small entry. It may have sounded more difficult than it was, but the probability is that Joyce and Proust are joining the great unreadables. These two giant invalids, who spun their cocoons at their leisure, require an equal respect for leisure from their readers, and many in wartime are not able to give it. Their values are not our values; they could afford to cultivate their personality and we cannot; they could neglect political forces, we cannot; they could live, we can only exist. Re-reading them, one wishes for a blue pencil to cut many thousand words at a time. Both are about half a million words too long.

It is interesting to compare them. Both dredged their memory for their material, both were time-obsessed; though Proust added the dimensions of time to his novel, while Joyce experimented in time-fantasies (one day for *Ulysses*, infinity for *Finnegan's Wake*). Proust, however, was placed at the heart of European culture, Joyce on the fringe of it, so that his work is very much more provincial. On the other hand, he is without snobbery while Proust is riddled with it. I had hoped that the competitors would see the curious tie-up between their novels, the link between the two groups Proust-Swann-Odette and Dedalus-Bloom-Mrs. Bloom. Swann and Bloom are the two unhappy, sensitive father figures, Odette and Marion the two unfaithful wives; Dedalus and Marcel the two unhappy, sensitive son figures. Paris and Dublin are the two cities they inhabit, and the seaside theme is also strangely vivid to both ("those lovely seaside girls," Bloom is fond of singing, while Proust's sub-title was "seascape with frieze of girls" and "*jeunes filles au bord de la mer*.") Albertine then becomes Miss Cissy Caffrey. What I would have most enjoyed would have been an entry which brought out all this, especially a parody of Proust's snobbish side, such as an account of the Parnell quarrel in *The Portrait of the Artist* in terms of the Dreyfus case, or simply of a dinner party *Chez Bloom*. "Mrs. Bloom, with that exquisite refinement of malice which I associated with the *Esprit de Tweedie*, offered her arm, not to 'Blazes' Boylan, whose family's antiquity was equal to her own, but to 'Buck' Mulligan, whose formidable social position was enhanced by his rapier wit, while Bloom, steeped in the ancient courtesy and traditions of Szombathely, presided over a ravishing dish of kidneys and made me an inclination, whether consciously to show he was aware of and powerless to resist this last terrible decision of his wife's (over the precedence of Mulligan to Boylan) which was to reverberate the next day through all the drawing-rooms of Donnycarney, and immeasurably affect, in a later volume, the social position of Kinch and Lenehan, or whether simply it (the inclination) was the result of a cerebral haemoplexia which he was equally powerless to control, whether unconscious or not I saw in the inclination of the head something of the fatalism of his race, something of the courtly bow of some Virag ancestor, equally grand seigneur, and who had already monopolised him that morning, when representing Madame Bloom-Tweedie at the funeral of Paddy Dignam."

The competitors for the main part were content to transcribe a bit from one author into the style of the other without the criticism which is implied in parody. [Fifty per cent. of competitors chose Proust, 50 per cent. chose Joyce, 20 per cent. came from Llandudno.]

I liked Philip Toynbee's conclusion (Bloom and Cissy Caffrey):

> Yet this act of imagined imprisonment and release awoke, at the moment of its completion, a revulsion against my captive which was not imagined but actual, not deliberately conceived for my own purpose, but as it were spontaneously evoked as a necessary consequence of my imagined possession. The girl thus became an active agent, bent on weakening still further a frame already weakened by many months in what my mother would have considered company beneath contempt.

I also liked Ronald Mason's beginning (Charlus and Morel):

> The Baron de Charlus, swiveleyed, loose-fleshed, goose-stepped sidewise boywards, lustily leering. . . . Hark, hark the Nark at Evans' gate rings and Phoebe's gins are iced.

No first prize is awarded, but a second prize to Allan M. Laing for a paraphrase of *Sodome et Gomorrhe*, Vol. II, p. 78.

(The passage chosen is from *Sodome et Gomorrhe*, Vol. II, page 78. It describes the reaction of Proust's own servants, Celeste Albaret and her sister, Marie Gineste, to one of their master's foibles. Because the translation is not Scott-Moncrieff's, but Dilys Powell's, I give the text of the relevant paragraph.)

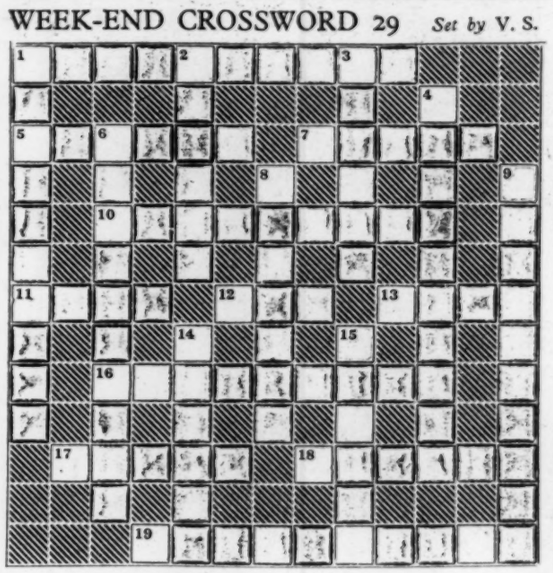
> It's she had the passon for similichoobs vol-pinched from the animazoo. The deer nose he don't clothe his eyes atoll atoll, she would murmur. Flutterbutter he flies in the nighty, and daydawn he's a three squir'l for the jumpabout—a that-zimthatwoz, the sort that goes flickerwik in the old shaynoo till it has the glimpies of ye fair batblindeyed. Ah now, but why will ye be for ever bibantuckering the poor lamb that likes to manchew his frugrunch all purthy-durthy? Arrahgwan, it's he doesn't mind tuckuppin his nappequin like a lilford fauntletory. The ould dictitler av him only crumsples the bedlamin fr'm hindmighty motovs. A grangallanbo he is, and devvlestrake it he will. Ten daily Times ye can nurswitch the great white cheefts of his leiderdown, an they dinmarked, but such is the grimmage and spitery of the ould pissanpan he'll dribbledrop 'em agenanagen. . . . Sure I did speak with the tungalungs of marxn engels when I towelld ye the great god Nevvn never intended the masther to be pinnyless.

What Proust wrote:

> She was always full of zoological comparisons, for according to her nobody knew when I got any sleep. I fluttered about all night like a butterfly, and in the daytime was as quick as squirrels. "You know, Marie, the kind you see at home, so fast you can't follow them even with your eyes." "But, Celeste, you know he does not like having a napkin when he is eating." "It is not that he doesn't like it, it is to let us know that you can't make him do anything he doesn't want to do. He is a grand gentleman and he wants to show it. You can change the sheets ten times if you like, but he won't give in. . . . Ah, I was right when I said that he wasn't meant to be born poor." (Printed in the *London Mercury*, April, 1938.)

ALLAN M. LAING.

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 29 *Set by* V. S.



The last week's winner is:
Martin Corfe, 6b Lee Terrace, Blackheath, S.E.3.

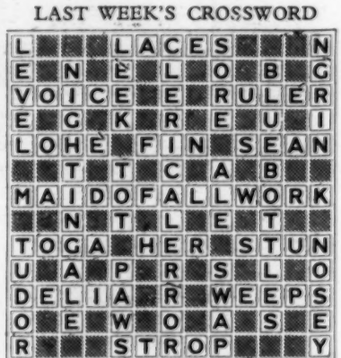
ACROSS—

1. Really mean pelt with stones. (10)
5. Assaults by camera-shot? (6)
7. Fruit of horse-thieving. (5)
10. Method by which a poet may broach his provisions. (9)
11. Didn't shame the devil but gave him quite a turn. (4)
12. Frequently necessitates amputation. (3)
13. He took me in exchange for stock. (4)
16. As a diversion from morning employment the chaps take tea. (9)
17. The policeman asks God for desiccated coco-nut. (5)
18. Was he without a 2nd penny for a brush-up? (6)
19. Refuse sleeping accommodation by telegraph. (6 & 4)

DOWN—

1. The street with one window curtain. (5 hyphen 5)
2. Never spare her having children! (6)
3. My cup's 'orrible 'ot. (6)
4. Exhausted before marriage? (5 & 5)
6. Petrified mother and child (5 hyphen 5)
8. Careful to change the letter but keep the spirit laid down by law. (3 & 4)
9. Waste and want for the French. (4 & 6)
14. Hide when you are in a train smash. (6)
15. I want to be a bishop and give praise. (6)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD



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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By URBANUS

THE LATEST REQUISITIONING—HARD-LUCK CASES —RE-INVESTMENT POSSIBILITIES

THE latest requisitioning order of the Treasury is not only the most extensive but for the investors the most damaging, for it contains the largest number of "recovery" stocks at depressed prices. This is the fifth of the Treasury requisitionings and its list of one hundred and sixty odd stocks brings the total number of American securities forcibly acquired from British holders up to 512. War always calls for unequal sacrifices and it is absurd to excite pity for capitalists who bought American stocks and are now forced to hand many of them over to the Government at a considerable loss. My only point is that as between one investor and another those who kept their money in Great Britain and the sterling area are being relatively favoured in this war and those who invested in dollar stocks are being punished. The trust companies can spread their losses, but sometimes private investors with American stocks are forced to make a heavy financial sacrifice in parting with their holdings to the Treasury at knock-out prices. Take, for example, First Boston Corporation capital stock which the Treasury seizes at about $14. Most British holders acquired this stock at between $35 and $45. Or take Pere Marquette Railway 5 per cent. prior preferred at about $50 or Electric Power and Light $6 preferred at about $27½. Most British holders acquired these stocks at more than double these prices. The list is replete with depressed utility preferred, such as American and Foreign Power, American Power and Light, Commonwealth and Southern, Cities Service, etc., and depressed railway bonds, such as Missouri-Pacific, which British investors were mainly holding for recovery. The sterling they receive from the Treasury cannot be invested in British securities with anything like the same chance of capital recovery. But as the Government has never yet evolved a fair basis of compensation for those who are economically and financially bombed in this war, it is no use shedding tears over this latest expropriation.

* * *

The Treasury might decently refrain from suggesting that the proceeds of its dollar expropriations should be reinvested in War Bonds which have no possibility of rising in value. Those investors who have been forced out of American railroad and utility stocks at low prices should logically consider reinvesting in depressed British railway and electricity and gas stocks such as :—

	Present Price	High 1938	Yield %
L.M. & S. 4% pref.....	53	82¼	7.5
L.M. & S. 4% 1923 pref.	35½	70¼	11.2
L. & N.E. 4% 1st pref.	34	68¼	11.7
Southern 5% pref. ord.	46	87	10.8
Gas Light & Coke £1..	10/6	25/9	—
London Associated Electric £1	13/6	32/9	—

Some of these do not offer as great a chance of capital appreciation as their American counterparts, but they are similar in industrial and investment quality. The Government might, of course, nationalise our public utility enterprises, but this will not happen until after the war.

* * *

This requisitioning is also peculiar for the number of important oil stocks it embraces—Amerada, Gulf, Pure Oil preferred, Shell Union, Standard Oil of Indiana, Tide-Water Associated preferred—all of which were well-known to British investors. The Shell Union seizure calls for comment. Does this take in the Royal Dutch-Shell holding? Out of the 13 million common shares issued about 5¾ millions originally belonged to the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum. I fancy that the Royal Dutch-Shell directors are too clever to be caught napping by the Treasury. The market believes that the group's holding in Shell-Union will be found to be in the names of the Bataafsche Petroleum, which is a Dutch registration. Nevertheless, Holland is an ally and something might be arranged between the Dutch and British Governments. If their Shell Union assets cannot be sold, could not the Royal Dutch and Shell directors raise a dollar loan against it as the British American Tobacco directors did against their holding in Brown and Williamson Tobacco? The net proceeds of the Tobacco loan enabled British American to hand over $25 millions to the British Treasury. A Shell Union loan ought to double that figure. Will someone at Shell House please take action? Incidentally, the expropriated holders of Shell Union will find it hard to reinvest in Shell Transport at so high a figure as 2⅞½. Why not back a victory in the Near East by buying Anglo-Iranian Oil—at the right moment? The present price is under 1½.

* * *

The London Stock Exchange will, of course, benefit from the reinvestment of the funds forced out of Wall Street. I do not know what would happen to Stock Exchange prices if it were not for the stimulant of an artificial influx of capital from time to time. But of course this cannot go on indefinitely, and when no further repatriation of British capital can take place we shall no doubt have to ration the sellers. The jobbers will see to that.

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